

Community and Communism in Russia



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I

Publishing Bordiga's texts on Russia and writing an introduction to them was rather repugnant to us. The Russian revolution and its involution are indeed some of the greatest events of our century. Thanks to them, a horde of thinkers, writers, and politicians are not unemployed. Among them is the first gang of speculators which asserts that the USSR is communist, the social relations there having been transformed. However, over there men live like us, alienation persists. Transforming the social relations is therefore insufficient. One must change man. Starting from this discovery, each has 'functioned' enclosed in his specialism and set to work to produce his sociological, ecological, biological, psychological etc. solution. Another gang turns the revolution to its account by proving that capitalism can be humanized and adapted to men by reducing growth and proposing an ethic of abstinence to them, contenting them with intellectual and aesthetic productions, restraining their material and affective needs. It sets computers to work to announce to apocalypse if we do not follow the advice of the enlightened capitalist. Finally there is a superseding gang which declares that there is neither capitalism nor socialism in the USSR, but a kind of mixture of the two, a Russian cocktail! Here again the different sciences are set in motion to place some new goods on the over-saturated market.

That is why throwing Bordiga into this activist whirlpool (and we also put ourselves there) provoked fear and repulsion. Nevertheless, running the risk of being carried along by this infamous mercantilism seems necessary because, on one hand, in every case, as Marx remarked "Can one escape dirt in ordinary bourgeois intercourse or trade? Precisely there is its natural abode." (Marx to Freiligrath, 29.2.1860.), and, on the other hand, the myth of Russian communism began to be washed fundamentally from the minds of those who searched and struggled and corrupted them less and less after the movement of May 1968. Bordiga's texts could be useful because of this, for passing from myth to reality and helping in the understanding of the coming communist revolution.

The Russian revolution has long been a thing of the past. It is interesting to study it nonetheless in the historical vibrations and in the questions it could not resolve. Bordiga, who closely followed all the vicissitudes of this revolution and its many faceted prolongation over the world, died in 1970. But his confrontation with the Russian phenomenon maintains an instructive and all-embracing character.

One has, then, to envisage the human being who produced the work presented here, because one must state from which historical global point of view it is that the Russian revolution is envisaged. Bordiga is especially known through Lenin's judgements: he was reproached for his abstentionism and taxed with anarchism. Also, for many people, Bordiga would only be the leftist who disappeared from the revolutionary scene around 1928. Superficially this is true. Convinced that it was the counter-revolution which generated

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great men, i.e. the clowns that he called battilocchi (1), he withdrew and disappeared into an anonymity (2) that was justified, but which is not to say that he abandoned the communist movement. From 1944 to 1970 he participated in the Internationalist Communist Party, which became the International Communist Party in 1964. His works appeared in the papers Battaglia comunista and il programma comunista and the reviews Prometeo and Sul filo del tempo.

Bordiga summed up his position on the Russian revolution at the end of the first part of Russia and Revolution in Marxist Theory (3), which simultaneously unveiled his fundamental theoretical (4) attitude, his absolute resistance to doubt, not to heuristic doubt, which is by definition only a kind of cunning of reason according to Hegel, placing certainty in brackets, but the doubt which is the penetration of the adversaries' power, invasion by the surrounding ideology, impregnation with death because of the abandonment of all enthusiasm, and all revolutionary perspective, which is concretized in the alliance with the existing currents and the acceptance of dominant formulae.

Bordiga wrote a lot on the Russian revolution. His activity was greatly conditioned by the need to defend it and, on the other hand, in 1951 he declared:

"The analysis of the counter-revolution in Russia and its reduction to formulae is not a central problem for the strategy of the proletarian movement during the recovery that we await, because it is not the first counter-revolution and marxism has known a whole series of them." (5)

1. "Why have we called the theory of the great men the theory of the battilocchio? The battilocchio is a person who draws attention and simultaneously shows his complete vacuity." (il Battilocchio 1953) (Translator's note)

2. We have discussed this question elsewhere and we have tried to define the historical importance of Bordiga (cf. La gauche communiste d'Italie et le PCI, Invariance Serie I, n. 9, and the introduction to Bordiga; la passion du communisme (Spartacus, Paris, 1974).

A number of Bordiga's texts have been translated into French in Programme Communiste, Le Fil du Temps and Invariance. The translations in the first two are often inexact, not purely on the level of translation, which is often a matter of appreciation, but because the translators often thought that they had to remove what did not suit them and to add what they wanted to Bordiga's texts. To avoid many notes, the reader is advised that the themes discussed in this study, often simply alluded to, have been treated more or less exhaustively in Invariance.

3. Russia et rivoluzione nella teoria marxista in il programma comunista 1954 no. 21 - 1955 no. 8.

4. We talk of a theoretical attitude because it is not a question of separating theory from practice. One must always tend to have a global activity with all human manifestations integrated.

5. Lezioni della contra-rivoluzione (Naples meeting, September 1951)

All his activity tended to go beyond the Russian revolution to pose the future revolution, while one can definitely state that he did not succeed in cutting his umbilical cord, the link with this revolution.

He immediately supported the Bolsheviks in 1917, without at times knowing the totality of the events and, in certain cases, he foresaw the measures they would take. The revolution was no surprise for him, it did not make him question marxism, but was an enlightening confirmation. What fundamentally preoccupied him was the preparation of the party in Italy as well as in the rest of the West for the accomplishment of the same task as the Bolsheviks': the seizure of power. It was from this viewpoint that he carried on the polemic on the creation of soviets. For him, they were born at the very moment of the revolution. But in Italy, especially in 1917, one had to aid it, to lead it, and one needed the class organ, the party, for that. Moreover, he stated that the soviets were most often conceived of through an anarcho-syndicalist vision: the proletariat creates the organs which are substituted (the capitalist mode of production (CMP) still being in force) for the capitalist organs: cf. his articles in Il Soviet in 1919-20. From 1919 on Bordiga thought that a great revolutionary opportunity had been lost and that the revolutionary phase had passed. Therefore one had to strengthen the party and to resist the foreseen offensive from the right which wanted to destroy the socialist forces. His interventions in the Communist International were in favour of strengthening the parties, claiming that the adoption of measures was so that all the parties of the International would have purely marxist positions, hence his role in the adoption of the 21 conditions, two of which were written under his inspiration. To confront the struggle on a world scale, one would have to have the correct class positions, flawlessly, without equivocation.

Later, when the phase of recession was really underway, the Communist International tried to restart revolutionary activity by going to the masses (united front), then by bolshevizing the national communist parties. Bordiga stood up against all these formulations, considering them to be camouflage measures of withdrawal, while being patent manifestations of a new wave of opportunism. However, he never questioned the proletarian, socialist, character of the Russian revolution. He thought that it had some peculiarities, but he neither spoke like the KAPD (Communist Workers' Party of Germany), which called it a "bourgeois revolution made by communists" (The Principle of the Antagonism between the Soviet Government and the Proletariat) from 1922 on, nor of the duality of the revolution:

"The Third International is a Russian creation, a creation of the Russian Communist Party. It was created to support the Russian revolution, that is, a partly proletarian, partly bourgeois, revolution." (6)

Edizioni Il programma comunista no. 7, p.3.

6. Leitsätzen der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Internationale, in Komm-

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Also, in replying to Korsch, who sent him the Platform of the Left (7):

"One cannot say that the 'Russian revolution was a bourgeois revolution'. The 1917 revolution was a proletarian revolution, while it would be wrong to generalize its 'tactical' lessons. Today the question posed is knowing what happens to a proletarian dictatorship in a country when a revolution does not follow in the others. ... It seems that you exclude the possibility of a Communist Party policy which would not end in the restoration of capitalism. That would be to revert to justifying Stalin or to supporting the inadmissible policy of 'his dismissal from power'." (Naples, 28.10.26.) (8)

Put another way, throughout this period he did not take a position on the social nature of the USSR. What was essential for him (and what few of his critics understood) was the nature of the Russian state and which class was in power. This was shown by the programme, by the actions of the party running the state. For Bordiga, the Russian party alone should not have run the state. That should have been done by the Communist International. That is why the 1926 debate, ending in the victory of the theory of socialism in one country, was crucial for him because it indicated a capital change of the state which no longer could be defined as proletarian because it was no longer at the service of the world revolution. But:

"One cannot simply state that Russia is a country tending towards capitalism." (9)

That is why it was only after the transfer of the USSR to the side of the western democracies that Bordiga stated that, henceforth, the counter-revolution had really triumphed and that capitalism would be built in the USSR.

If capitalism tended to triumph, how would one characterize the USSR and, on the other hand, what was the origin of capitalism's development? Was there a retreat, that is, would there have been socialism and, from that, the CWP would have been reinstalled in Russia? Bordiga maintained his political thesis in this debate which developed very vigorously after 1945. He still talked of the socialist characteristics of the economy in Soviet Russia from the Revolution to Today (10). Here he replied to the question: which

unistische Arbeiter-Zeitung (Essner Richtung) 1922 no.1. English edition in Herman Gorter The Communist Workers' International (London, 1977)

7. The Platform of the Left was adopted at a national conference of the extreme left in Berlin (2.4.1926.) and was published in the pamphlet Der Weg der Komintern (Berlin, 1926). Partial English translation in Helmut Gruber Soviet Russia masters the Comintern (New York, 1974).

8. First published in Prometeo no. 7, October 1928.

9. ibid.

10. La Russia sovietica dalla rivoluzione all'oggi in Prometeo serie II, no. 1.

class is in power in Russia?

"In fact the class exploiting the Russian proletariat (and which will appear, perhaps, in broad day light in not too long) is today constituted by two evident historical forms: international capitalism and the same oligarchy which dominates in the interior and on which the peasants, traders, enriched speculators and the intellectuals, who swiftly obtain the greatest favours, all depend."

The whole of the article shows Bordiga's international perspective and the importance he gave to the political factor, i.e. to the capacity that a proletarian state could have to apply measures in the direction of the development of the bases of socialism. To return to the ruling class, he characterized it in other articles as a host of hidden entrepreneurs. This did not stop him from speaking of bureaucracy too, but he did not make it a determining strata or, as did Chaulieu, a ruling class. Yet, the difficulties with which he tried to unmask the existence of this class were always stated. He had to intervene in the debate on the social nature of the USSR in which some envisaged state capitalism where the state would be all powerful and could run capital, and others saw bureaucratic capitalism (Chaulieu in Socialisme ou barbarie no. 2), and on the role of the USSR in the play of international forces. Most 'left' revolutionaries tended to see the USSR as the centre of the counter-revolution because state capitalism or bureaucratic capitalism was, according to them, a much more powerful form of domination, a higher stage of capitalism than the one possible in West Europe or in the USA.

Bordiga began to draft Property and Capital (11) in reply, with really fundamental elements of explanation, producing a contribution to the clarification of the future of Russian society and that in the West, bordering on simple leninist repetitions. In the chapter Modern Tendency of the Enterprise without property, allocations and concessions, he confronted a question that he took up again later in Economic and Social Structure of Russia Today (12), he stated:

"The modern state has never really had a direct economic activity, but it has always been delegated by the intermediary of allocations and concessions to capitalist groups." (13)

Here we see the assertion of the positive critique of state capitalism and the bureaucracy-class. This is explained in the chapter Economic Interventionism and Direction as capital handling the State:

"It is not a case of the partial subordination of capital to the state, but an ulterior subordination of the state to capital." (14)

Finally he analysed The Phases of the Transformation of Russia

11. Proprieta e capitale in Prometeo serie II 1-4

12. Struttura Economica e Sociale della Russia d'Oggi in il programma comunista 1955 no. 10 - 1957 no. 12

13. Prometeo serie II no. 1 p. 22

14. ibid. p. 24

8.

after 1917 where he dealt with the question of the ruling class in Russia:

"The difficulty in finding a physical group of men who constitute this bourgeoisie which was not formed spontaneously and which, to the extent that it was formed under Tsarism, was destroyed after 1917, presents a great difficulty due only to the fact of the democratic and petit-bourgeois mode of thought which the pretended masters of the working class have infected it with for decades." (15)

Thus it was a matter of knowing who represented the capitalist economic interests. It is clear that Bordiga would have to contradict such a bourgeois mode of thought in its archaic (i.e. democratic) form: everything that exists, which manifests itself, must be represented, there must be an intermediary between the thing and those who see it, the intermediary is a delegation of the existence regarding those who must state and study this existence. For Bordiga, a fundamentally anti-democratic man, the intermediary had no importance. On the other hand, the bureaucracy was chosen to fill the hiatus by all those who preoccupied themselves with Russia. Bordiga showed that, on the contrary, the bureaucracy depended on the businessmen:

"...the bourgeoisie, which has never been a caste, but which emerges by defending the right of 'virtual' and total equality, becomes a 'network of spheres of interest which constitute themselves in the cell of each enterprise', at the rate and to the extent that the bourgeois enterprises become personnel collectives, anonymities, and finally 'public'. The personnel of such a cell is extremely varied. They are no longer owners, bankers or shareholders, but more and more speculators, economic experts and businessmen. One of the characteristics of the development of the economy is that the privileged class has an increasingly changing and fluctuating human material (the oil sheiks who were baliffs and will be so again). As in all epochs, such a network of interests and persons, who are more or less visible, has relations with the state bureaucracy, but it itself is not the bureaucracy, it has relations with 'circles of politicians', but it is not a political category. During capitalism above all such a network is 'international' and today there are no longer national bourgeois classes. There are national states of the world capitalist class.

Today the Russian state is one of them, but with a certain historically unique origin. In fact it is the only one originating in the unity of two revolutions by the political and insurrectionary victory. It was the only one that was turned back from the second revolutionary task, but it has still not exhausted the first: making Russia a region of mercantile economy (with profound consequences for Asia)." (16)

Concerning the role of Russia on a world scale, Bordiga stated

15. *ibid.* no. 4, p. 123

16. *ibid.*

that the centre of the counter-revolution was the USA and not the USSR. The USA could intervene alone or through the UN, and in his polemic with Damen (17), he offered this witicism to make himself better understood:

"..let us remove Baffone (i.e. Stalin) from Moscow and, so as not to ridicule anyone, let us replace him with Alpha (i.e. Bordiga). Truman, who has already thought over these questions, would arrive five minutes later." (18)

Bordiga saw the basic victory of the counter-revolution in the fact that the stalinists had sided with the USA during the 1939-45 war. The USSR had been bought with the US Dollar. He stated that the same would happen to China at the time of the Korean war.

All this was given in thesis form at the Internationalist Communist Party Naples meeting, Lessons of counter-revolutions, double revolutions, capitalist revolutionary nature of the Russian economy (1951). These were partly scandalous for some people; how could one continue to use the adjective revolutionary for the USSR in 1951? Now Bordiga restated it in Russia and Revolution in Marxist Theory; for him there had been other revolutions and there are others (when Bordiga wrote) than the one we have to realize: the communist revolution. Given its non-appearance and especially the lack of any important precursory sign of its approach, it was evident (for Bordiga) that the generalization of the CMP in Russia and Asia was a revolutionary phenomenon, as Marx had stated in 1848 for the development of capital in Europe.

However, if one considers now that the Russian revolution has, by definition, only been able to give rise to the CMP, the characteristics of present Russian society must be described again as well as those of the ruling class. If the questions unfailingly re-emerge, it is because the analysis had not basically regained the essential point of capital's development and it had not described the most recent tendencies. That is why Bordiga had to return to Marx so as to describe the Russian phenomenon.

"True to a vision which has forgotten materialism is the one allowing itself to go astray when it does not see the 'person' of

17. Old member of the Italian left, still living. He was a communist deputy before the Second World War. During that war he actively defended the thesis of the transformation of the imperialist war into a class war and was one of the main founders of the Internationalist Communist Party in 1943 (Bordiga did not participate in it, he was not in agreement over the opportunity of creating such a party). His various disagreements with Bordiga, especially over the Russian question and the perspectives of the development of the workers' movement after the war, were one of the reasons for the split of 1952. One part of the party was to become the International Communist Party (with Bordiga), the other kept the old name (with Damen) and continues to publish the paper Battaglia comunista and the review Prometeo. Damen has written a small book Amadeo Bordiga Validita e limiti d'una esperienza (epi, Milan, 1971).

18. *ibid.* p. 46 (letter to Damen from Bordiga, 9.7.51.)

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the individual capitalist in the front rank. Capital was an impersonal force from the youngest Marx. Determinism without men is meaningless, that is true, but men constitute the instrument and not the motor." (19)

The debate, in fact, centred again on a definition of capital. In Murder of the Dead he recalled that Marx characterized the CMP by the production of surplus-value and the greed for surplus-labour ("The voracious appetite for surplus labour" in Capital Vol. I (20)). He confronted the "novelty of state capitalism" on this basis:

"Once constant capital is posed as zero, gigantic development of profit occurs. That is the same as saying that the enterprise profit remains if the disadvantage of maintaining constant capital is removed from the capitalist.

This hypothesis is only state capitalism's present reality. Transferring capital to the state means that constant capital equals zero. Nothing of the relationship between entrepreneurs and workers is changed, since this depends solely on the magnitude of variable capital and surplus-value.

Are analyses of state capitalism something new? Without any haughtiness we use what we knew from 1867 at the latest. It is very short: $Cc = 0$.

Let us not leave Marx without this ardent passage after the cold formula:

"Capital is dead labour which, vampire like, lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks." (21)

Bordiga developed this theme which he often readopted on the relationship between state capitalism, business activity and speculative exploitation of natural disasters (defining the Italian economy as a specialist in the economy of disaster). Here he showed that capitalism is, at its greatest development, generalized gangsterism universal delinquency and, let us add, madness.

"To exploit living labour, capital must give birth to dead labour. Liking to suck warm young blood, it kills corpses." (22)

For it is only through the destruction of constant capital, above all the fixed part, that it can free the new production process where capital can again satisfy its greed for surplus labour.

On the other hand, he replied in Doctrine of possessed by the Devil (23) to the question, what is the ruling class? Here again he relied on Marx's analysis in Capital:

"The person of the capitalist no longer matters here, capital exists without him a hundred fold the same process. The human subject has become useless. A class not comprising of individuals?

19. Bussole impazzite (Compasses struck with madness) in Battaglia comunista 1951 no. 20

20. Capital Vol. I (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976) p. 344

21. Omicidio dei morti in Battaglia comunista 1951 no. 24. The citation is from Capital Vol. I p. 342. 22. ibid.

23. La dottrina del diavolo in corpo in Battaglia comunista 1951 no. 20

The state not at the service of a social group, but an inpalpable power, a work of the Holy Ghost and the Devil? Let us refer to the irony of our old Mr. Marx. Here is the promised quote:

"By turning his money into commodities which serve as the building materials for a new product, and as factors in the labour process, by incorporating living labour into their lifeless objectivity, the capitalist simultaneously transforms value, i.e. past labour in its objectified and lifeless form, into capital, value which can perform its own valorization process, an animated monster which begins to 'work', 'as if possessed by the devil'." (24)

In 1952 Bordiga replied to Stalin's Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR with Dialogue with Stalin (25) where he restated what he had said in previous articles (cf. In the Whirlpool of mercantile anarchy); the Russian revolution was over. He also refuted the stalinist thesis of the law of value persisting under socialism, a refutation repeated several times after. Each time Bordiga was obliged to return to Marx's work to resume the integral study of the critique of political economy.

The statement that the Russian revolution was over left a question undecided. How was it that the proletariat could perform a bourgeois revolution? (Bordiga accused Lenin of being the great bourgeois, Stalin, the romantic revolutionary). October 1917, was it not at all proletarian? It was then that Bordiga drafted a series of articles studying the earliest origins of the Russian revolution. He insisted on the conclusion already drawn by the KAPD in 1922: the revolution was a double, proletarian and bourgeois, revolution. Since the former had been readSORBED (that had already been partly affirmed in 1946) and the second had largely flourished. The proletariat has thus realized the bourgeois revolution:

"With this state of suspense passed by with the very wars lost on the frontiers and the national humiliation of seeing the Muslim and yellow peoples more advanced in the capitalist methods of warfare, they had found all the tendencies for the 'romantic' task of the proletariat; i.e. how to resolve the historical puzzle of not taking power itself, but of giving it to its social exploiters. A whole literature worked for this and by a series of giants from, perhaps, Gogol on, while the greats, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Gorky, had in various ways and to different extents, absorbed the social postulates of the West: characteristic of romantic and non-marxist thought." (26)

"As there was no bourgeoisie conscious of its own class power,

24. Cf. Capital Vol. I p. 302. The final citation is from Goethe's Faust and is correctly translated as "as if its body were by love possessed" (as in Fowkes' edition). We have changed the citation only to maintain coherence with Bordiga's title and the citation translation of the Italian edition of Capital.

25. Dialogato con Stalin (ed. Prometeo, Milan, 1953)

26. Fiorite primavere del capitale (Flowering spring of capital) in Il programma comunista 1953 no. 4

12.

the marxists thus set to work as 'enlighteners', i.e. to repeat the bourgeoisie's thought in its romantic part." (27)

Finally there are eight theses on Russia in The Bear and its Great Novel (28). They define the result of the revolutionary process. Thesis five dealt with the ruling class:

"The statement of the present lack of a statistically definable bourgeois class does not contradict the previous thesis, since this fact was stated and foreseen by marxism well before the revolution, given that the power of modern capitalism is defined by the forms of production and not by national groups of individuals."

Then Bordiga thought that he had sufficiently clarified the 'Russian question' and that one could approach other important ones:

"The comrade (Bordiga) foresaw that this meeting would include a section dedicated to the problem of America and western capitalist countries in particular, given that a considerable previous work had sufficiently crystallized in outlines a general definition of our mode of considering Russia and its social economy. It showed the marxist concept of the double revolution, one grafted on the other, or impure revolution (giving the term an historical and not a moral meaning). The Dialogue (with Stalin) and other texts had sufficiently systematized this part, now we have to study a pure, solely anticapitalist, proletarian, revolution." (29)

But the umbilical cord linking the PCI militants to the Russian revolution was difficult for them to break and, for them, all these explanations had not clarified enough the 'enigma'. They called for the subject to be exhausted somehow. After dealing with Factors of Race and Nation in Marxist Theory and The Agrarian Question (30), which was in fact an introduction to a study of Russia (Bordiga insisted on the thesis capitalism = agrarian revolution, and on the fact that the agrarian problem was the central problem which the Russian revolution had to resolve and the communist revolution also will have to resolve), he had to return to Russia to begin Russia and Revolution in Marxist Theory.

Thus the reader can gain an idea of the way in which the work presented was born. One should note that the majority of the themes were treated in a fragmentary fashion in articles and, besides, there was a continual exchange between the explanations of Russian society and the clarification of the critique of political economy. There is the constant theme of the dictatorship of the proletariat

27. Malenkov-Stalin: tappa non tappa (Malenkov-Stalin: patchwork not a stage) in il programma comunista 1953 no. 6

28. L'orso e il suo grande romanzo in il programma comunista 1955 no. 3

29. Meeting at Genoa in il programma comunista 1953 no. 9.

30. I fattori di razza e nazione nella teoria marxista (Factors of race and nation in marxist theory) in il programma comunista 1953 nos. 16-20. La questione agraria (The Agrarian Question) in ibid. 1953-4.

which could have directed the development of the productive forces in immense Russia. That is why what interested Bordiga was the nature of the state, not only because he did not delude himself on the fact that the state could avoid being determined by the economic and social structure. He knew very well that, in Russia, from a certain moment, the social forces would inevitably have to eliminate the proletarian state unsupported by a revolution in the West. But he did not go into the economic domain, but into the political field in order to find the involution of the revolution. It was only when the state had become definitely capitalist that he really preoccupied himself with the economic and social structure, for now one had to understand how the forces which will have to struggle for the future communist revolution will be born and orientate themselves. It is revealing that it was at the time of the Twentieth Congress, the time that he stated that Russia had confessed to its integration into the capitalist camp, that he gave his prediction of the communist revolution for 1975.

Bordiga's writings on the USSR after 1957 are not very interesting. They are only an illustration of what he had stated and explained in earlier texts. Besides, what was virulently repeated was the axiom: one did not construct communism, one only destroyed the obstacles to its development. He would have had to have made an exhaustive analysis of the development of the CMP to make a fundamental contribution. Now this was (in spite of several essential remarks, possibly points of departure for fruitful research) too 'physiocratic' because it considered the mass of production and its growth rhythms. In 1964, after the failure of Khruschev's economic measures, his sacking and the satisfaction of the kolkhozians' demands, Bordiga remarked:

"Nevertheless, obviously the road to the full forms of capitalism in Russia will be hard and difficult and will have again to bring large capital into conflict with small property, which large capital has not been able to avoid supporting and reinforcing. Thus is buried the heroic and huge effort of the Bolshevik avant-garde which foresaw the sole possibility for resistance in the wake of the proletarian world revolution, like a besieged fortress, as refuge in state capitalism controlled by the proletarian dictatorship, committing the leap to economic socialism to the arms of the future and inevitable revolutionary wave in the industrialized countries in the West." (31)

Unfortunately this diagnosis was used in an immediate and polemical fashion to show that, unlike what Khruschev had trumpeted, the USSR could not catch up with the USA. One should have asked the question: are there not geo-social areas where the CMP cannot develop and, if it did, would that not be at the cost of immense difficulties so that even the positive side that there had been in the West would be obliterated in these areas? But this implied the adoption of a critical attitude to the Bolsheviks' actions. Now Bor-

31. Involuzione Russe; 'Terra e libertà' (Russian involutions; 'Land and liberty') in il programma comunista 1964 no. 22

14.

diga was not up to asking such a question. He always maintained the leninist presuppositions and followed them through to their conclusions. One can say that, somehow, the Russian revolution ended as a political phenomenon with him, a phenomenon having to master the economic forces in the direction of developing to socialism.

It is useful to know Bordiga's other works so as really to understand his position on Russia. We shall summarize them briefly. Bordiga was fundamentally anti-democratic and anti-innovating, i.e. he fought those who thought that it was necessary and possible to create a new theory or that one must publish marxism, defined as:

"One uses the expression 'marxism' not to mean a doctrine discovered and introduced by the individual Karl Marx, but to refer to the doctrine arising with the modern industrial proletariat and 'accompanying' it during the whole course of a social revolution - and we conserve the name 'marxism' despite all the speculation and exploitation of it by a series of counter-revolutionary movements." (32)

What is essential is the reference to a class defining itself by the mode of production it aims to create. The method by which it has to realize this creation is its programme. The fundamental lines of the programme for the proletarian class were established from 1848. They are: the proletariat must constitute itself as a class, thus as a party. Then it must make itself the state to destroy all classes, thus itself, and allow the development of communism (cf. The Fundamentals of Revolutionary Communism, 1957). The party is thus seen on the one hand as part of the class, as the prefiguration of communist society, "the projection into the present of the social man of tomorrow" (cf. The Theory of the Primary Function of the Party, 1959), on the other as an organ of resistance at the moment when the proletarian class has been beaten and finds itself under the influence of the ruling ideology, and so the party has to maintain the 'class line'. Marxism, seen not only as the theory of the revolution, but as the theory of the counter-revolution, can resist, and this consist in maintaining the entire programme of the class. Thus the formal party to which Bordiga belonged could see itself as the intermediary between the preceding phase, when the proletariat was constituted as a class, and the coming phase, when the revolution would rise anonymously, setting the whole class in motion. Bordiga admitted that the formal party could disappear, that is, that it could come about that there would no longer be any revolutionaries defending the class programme after a certain time, but the party must be reborn after a "distant but enlightening future" by following the dynamic present in capitalist society and the fact of the absolute necessity of communism for the species.

What therefore is basic in the phase of recession (i.e. of strong counter-revolution which forces the class to retreat to earlier positions), is the description of communism, the very behaviour of

32. L'invarianza storico di marxismo (The historical invariance of marxism) in Sul filo del tempo 1954 p. 19

Marx and Engels, which Bordiga said they took all their lives to describe. So one can maintain the line of the future in the despicable present, so resisting the counter-revolution by the rejection of all democratic formulae and all stray impulses to innovate. This implies a structural anti-activism because one can only intervene in 'periods ripe with history' of humanity. Then one must throw oneself headlong into the battle and not to give in at the first shock, not abandon the party as soon as the enemy has gained a certain advantage. This was the meaning of the reflections on the debate of 1926. One should have resisted, the world proletariat organized by the Communist International should have faced capitalism while awaiting the opening of the fresh revolutionary cycle. But once this was abandoned, one had to some extent to pass through purgatory and then await the counter-revolution to complete its tasks. Bordiga thought that this was realized in 1956. Hence the proclamation of a new revolutionary cycle culminating in 1975.

One had to restore marxism, negated by the stalinists, one more time during the period of waiting, without ever losing sight of the immediate movements of the class, in order to see how far they shake the implacable dictatorship of capital. But this has to be done without illusions. Thus he stated that there would not be a revolution after the Second World War (the fascist nations had lost the war, but fascism had won), that the Third World War was not imminent, the cold war only being a form of peace. Therefore there could not be a revolution after a short maturation as those believed in an imminent third conflict inevitably giving rise to a revolution afterwards held. The Berlin movement (1953) was not the start of a new revolutionary cycle. Nor too was the 1956 Hungarian uprising, because both were the work of multi-class movements while the proletariat could only win by organizing autonomously, in struggling for its own ends.

Nevertheless, it is evident that all this belongs to the past and many ask what importance does it have? What importance in not flattering Yugoslavia as a new socialist country? Of not having repeated the same operation for Cuba, China, or having not stated that the centre of the revolution was, nonetheless, in the countries of the so-called third world? In fact, what use is it when all the world is now convinced of the opposite?

It is because, in fact, he had a foresight of a certain future of society that Bordiga was able to have a well determined behaviour allowing him to escape the revolutionary masquerade of the post-war period led by trotskyist and similar groups. His coherence lay there, a theory is not useful if it does not afford a foresight. Now one cannot foresee without any certainty.

Bordiga disagreed with the Bolsheviks several times over the question of democracy. He was an abstentionist, rejecting all participation in parliament, all democratic mechanisms. One had to define tactics rigorously in relation to the conditions of clearly defined struggles in the historical phases when the proletariat intervened. Similarly he rejected the theory of state capitalism and considered the theory of imperialism to be completely insufficient

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etc.. Despite that, we have already repeated, he never broke with Lenin because he was, for Bordiga, the theoretician of the dictatorship of the proletariat (coherent with Marx) and that he was capable of applying it in a huge country. On the other hand, the whole development of the anti-colonial revolutions reinforced the correctness of the leninist position for him. Hence the birth of the uncritical apologia for the Bolsheviks and, so doing, he defended the Italian left and himself against accusations of anarchism, ultra-leftism, passivity etc., which led him to maintaining false judgments on the KAPD, Pannekoek etc., especially where it concerned questions where they were definitely very close to him.

But this is only a particular aspect of Bordiga's work. What is essential, what characterizes him, makes him entrancing, living, is what was indicated in Bordiga: la passion du communisme; his certainty of the revolution, communism, displayed prophetically. Humanity advanced by revolutionary leaps up to communism, according to him. This evolution was the work of millions feeling their way and, sometimes, leaping enlightened by huge revolutionary explosions. He compared all human history (33) to a huge river bounded by two dykes, on the right that of social conservatism on which marched a chanting band of priests and police as the cantors of the official lies of the class, on the left that of reformism on which paraded the men devoted to the people, the businessmen of opportunism, the progressives. The two bands insult each other from opposite banks, while fully agreed that the river should remain in its channel. But the immense flood of human history also has its irresistible and menacing swellings and sometimes, rounding a meander, it floods over the dykes, drowning the miserable bands in the impulsive and irresistible inundation of the revolution which overthrows all old forms and gives society a new face.

II

Despite all the works on the Russian revolution and on soviet society, we believe that instead of closing, the study had not really begun, because two essential questions have escaped attention: those of the community and the periodization of the CMP into formal and real domination of capital. A host of other questions derive from these two, so we shall simply note that our aim is not to consider the Russian question exhaustively, but to put forward again the debate over it by integrating Bordiga's work.

The Russian revolution should and could have been the prologue to the last revolution of our species, according to what might be called the historical party. That is why it is fascinating and calls for study, not in itself, but as a moment of what is awaited, but certain (Bordiga). It concretely universalized the communist revolution because it developed in an area where the communitarian phenomenon

33. Piena e rottura della civiltà borghese (Filling and Bursting of bourgeois civilization) in Battaglia comunista 1951 no. 23

was still alive, thus showing that the communist revolution is not the solution solely for class society. It extended the horizons of the western revolutionaries who only conceived of the true future in their own countries, and only thought of the human future as a function of the movement in their area, their civilization. There was a juxtaposition of two worlds until the Russian revolution. One where private property, the individual, classes and exchange value had autonomized themselves; the other where man was still the goal of production, where progress was yet to be created. How would these two humanities unite? The one going through the hell of class society, and the other still enclosed in its communities. Marx asked this question in 1858 and still had no answer in view:

"The difficult question for us is this: on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will immediately assume a socialist character. Is it not bound to be crushed in this small corner, considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant?" (1)

He still envisaged that all people had to pass through the bourgeois and capitalist phase. He did not think of the possibility of a leap. It was during the study of Russia that he discovered, thanks to the Russian revolutionaries, the solution effecting the necessary and vital generalization for our common destiny, also implying the reconciliation of men at various moments of their development, without necessarily putting this on an axiological scale.

He could understand the problem of the revolution in Russia because he had already thought over the question of the community. He had rediscovered it on the basis of a classist approach, because, even if there were still living remains of communities in the West in Marx's time (around Trier in Germany, in Corsica and Spain), the study did not need to be based fundamentally on them. Now this is really the central question of communism. Marx had already stated it in Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, where he said that the true supersession of the state could only be the community (Gemeinwesen), which appeared clearly in On the Jewish Question. In the 1844 Manuscripts, he specified that the community could not be opposed to the individual, while in his article against Ruge's The King of Prussia and Social Reform, he stated that human being is the real Gemeinwesen of man (2). However, it is perhaps in notes on James Mill's book (1844) that one can find the most remarkable indications on the Gemeinwesen (3) and communism where individ-

1. Marx to Engels 8.10.1858. in Marx Engels Selected Correspondence (Moscow, 1956) p. 134.

2. "Das menschliche Wesen ist das wahre Gemeinwesen der Menschen." (Marx Engels Werke Band I, Berlin 1961, p. 408). The English edition (Marx Engels Collected Works Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 204) translated this as "Human nature is the true community of men.", which greatly reduces the force of the sentence. (Translator's note)

3. Marx often used the word Gemeinwesen, which can also frequently be found in Hegel for whom the theme of the Gemeinwesen had considerable importance. In certain cases, one can translate it by commun-

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uals are social men and their human being is their Gemeinwesen. Marx would not have been able to recognize the revolution against the state in the 1871 Paris Commune, which realized the outline of the Gemeinwesen-human being, if it had not been for this theoretical supersession due to the irruption of the proletariat, the class having to abolish all classes, onto the historical scene. It also explains why Engels was able to say that one should translate commune by the old German word Gemeinwesen. Finally we must insist on the fact that communism could not be defined as anarchy for Marx; as "atheism is the final recognition of theism, the negative recognition of God", anarchy is the negative recognition of the state, the last stage of the state.

However, the study of the Gemeinwesen took on much greater depth in the 1850's when Marx tried to encompass the movement of exchange value and its transformation into capital. The key texts here are the Urtext and the section of the Grundrisse entitled Forms preceding Capitalist Production:

"If free labour and the exchange of this free labour against money, to reproduce and valorize money, to come to be consumed by money as use value, not for enjoyment, but as use value for money, is a requirement for wage labour and one of the historical conditions for capital, so is the separation of the free labour from the objective conditions of its realization - from the means of labour and labour material - another requirement. Thus, first of all the detachment of the worker from the soil, thus his natural laboratory - thence dissolution of small free landed property as well as communal (gemeinschaftlichen) land holding as the land holding based on the oriental commune (Kommune)."⁽⁴⁾

Here it is clear that one had to study the activity of humans from

ity, but in others this reduces its semantic force. Gemeinwesen also means subjectified community as one affirming itself in a human individuality, social man, i.e. how a social man subjectifies the community in himself. It is thus the modality of being of the objectified community, which always exists and always will do, outside him. In the 1844 Manuscripts, Marx asserted that one must not oppose the individual to the community. In the notes on James Mill's book, he stated that social man reproduces his individuality and Gemeinwesen. If the elementary unity (appallingly called the individual) is only singular, one is always infested with the binary, metaphysical opposition: singular - individual. Communism, which is not a society, is characterized by the destruction of this bipolarity. The Lukacsian totality would be insufficient to describe it. Totality is often totalitarian and sometimes is only an inflated unity, the latter being a totality in reduction, i.e. one has the triumph of identicalness, of the same, the triumph of death. Communism can only exist if there is a multiplicity - diversity of social men (individualities), because communism is life.

4. Marx Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf) 1857-8 (Verlag für Fremdsprachige Literatur, Moscow, 1939) p. 375. (English Translation (Harmondsworth, 1974) p. 471 is inexact).

their discontinuity with nature and one had to understand how their activity was externalized, autonomized and made into an oppressive power which dissolved their community. Then philosophy, politics and religion only appeared as interpretations of a profound phenomenon: the expropriation of humans. Also, starting from this study, one will be able to remove all the rigidity and limitation to the Communist Manifesto formula that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles", a formula that even Engels' footnote did not succeed in removing. The rigid schema of 1859 must be corrected by the later works of Marx. Classes can only develop with the destruction of the community. They are inhibited as much as the community exists. There can be a division of labour without a class society. Caste society only expresses the impossibility for a given society to give rise to classes, which does not mean at all that class was a necessity, not that caste was its precursor. They are two human organizations in two very dissimilar social forms.

We can, as Marx did, make the following periodization by taking into account the movement of value and its presuppositions. The primary formation, which includes all forms where communal property in land is the basis of society, its foundation. What is called primitive communism is only the very old first form which was probably the product of man's evolution from the Australanthropos stage (over one million years ago) to Homo sapiens. This implies the idea of biological evolution parallel to technico-social evolution. So primitive communism was the behaviour of the human species when there was an immediate union among the component members and between these members and their natural environment. It is the social form where the motion of value has yet to begin, where the division of labour, labour, the exchange system (actually consisting of a series of reciprocal gifts which are more or less differentiated, thus ensuring a circulation of products and inhibiting a process leading to inequality), all that is still a totality as yet unfragmented. In particular, as Marx said, the individual member was not yet a worker.

Later the movement of exchange value grafts itself onto the pre-existing structures and tends to autonomize itself. Thus one gets the forms that Marx called Asiatic because he found them, or at least evidence for them, in that huge continent (5). He remarked in the Forms preceding capitalist production that:

"When they finally do settle down, the extent to which this original community (Gemeinschaft) is modified will depend on various external, climatic, geographic, physical etc. conditions as well as on the particular natural predisposition - their clan character." (6)

It is very important that Marx should have talked of Asiatic forms and not an Asiatic form. One could tackle the study of the communarian forms still existing in Africa, which bear a certain resemblance to the Asiatic forms, on this basis. This would also show their

5. Marx to Engels 14.3.1868. in Marx Engels Werke Band 32 (Berlin, 1965) pp. 42-3.

6. Grundrisse German ed. p. 376, English ed. p. 472.

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original character, thus completing Marx's work which did not deal with Africa, apart from his notes on Algeria, written in 1882. Whatever the case, what is important here for us is to show that the greatest part of humanity has not had a history of class struggle, which is not to say that there have not been struggles between human groups. Marx said that war was the basic activity-production of communities. On the other hand, communities continued for a long time even in societies that had become class societies, and may have held back the class struggle.

Marx considered a number of forms inside the primary formation, but the Asiatic mode of production could not be included. It is a particular Asiatic form which, following the very specific geographical conditions correctly shown by Wittfogel (he named the society conditioned by the whole of these conditions hydraulic society), had a unique development. On the other hand, the famous Asiatic stagnation did not mean that this continent could not give rise to an important technology, science and art. A certain development of the productive forces was possible; however, it would always reach a limit: the impossibility of the autonomization of individuals and classes, i.e. exchange value could not be autonomized, thus the two essential conditions for the birth of capital were not produced. It is this leap of the productive forces which was not realized. Asia also underwent great periods of flowering where it reached a point where it seemed that a leap could be made. All the essential conditions for the transition to the CMP occurred as in the West, save one: the cutting of the umbilical cord of the community (Marx).

The secondary formation regrouped all the forms founded on private property, which implied the existence of individuals (the person subject to exchange, as Marx said in the Urtext) and so too classes. Thus one had slavery or the ancient mode of production (old form), the feudal form, or the feudal mode of production, the Asiatic mode of production where private property, if it existed, did not allow the autonomization of individuals as people were dependent totally on the supreme unity: generalized slavery. In fact, real private property only existed at the level of the encompassing unity (zusammenfassende Einheit).

The tertiary form is the capitalist form or the capitalist mode of production. It is no longer founded on the property of the working person, but on another's labour (cf. the inversion indicated in the Communist Manifesto, Grundrisse, and Capital vol. I, chapter 24). Two movements are united at the level of capital: the expropriation of humans, creating the proletariat, and the autonomization of value. Capital had taken over the transfer of money in the destruction of the old communities, and from this new basis tended to pose itself as a material community, then fictitiously, accomplishing this during the real domination of society by capital. Thus capital resolves the old contradictions created during the emergence of value in the archaic communities, but in its own way. That is why it poses itself as an eternal structure, both positively and as a speculative subject, allowing it to transform all negating movements into its own

affirmation.

The communist revolution can no longer operate on the previous ground, the ground capital has gone over and now develops again, i.e. the terrain of the growth of the forces of production. It is a matter of a new Gemeinwesen which would be human being. Hence, evidently, the necessity for the most radical break with all the activity and behaviour linked to previous revolutions, especially the Russian revolution. Besides, here we see where two of Marx's investigations converged on the same statement, though they came from different moments of his life.

Marx characterized the communities (in the Slav region above all) thus in Forms preceding capitalist production:

"...little communes (Gemeinden) vegetate independently alongside one another where, inside them, the individual and his family work independently on the lot assigned to them." (7)
which is the difference with the Asiatic mode of production where the self-sufficient communities, as in the previous case, are dominated, one should stress, by an encompassing unity as the real land owner. The small communities are merely possessors.

Marx gave some specifications in the drafts of his letter to Zasulich:

"All other communities rely on relations of consanguinity of their members. One does not enter it, at least only if one is a natural parent or is adopted. Their structure is that of the genealogical tree. The 'agricultural commune' was the first social grouping of free men which was not organized by blood ties." (8)

Another characteristic is its dualism. There is a collective element and an individual element such that individuality can develop (the individual could be autonomized).

"One understands that the dualism inherent in the contradiction of the agricultural commune can endow it with a vigorous life. Communal land holding and the emanating social relationships, emancipated from the strong but limited bonds of the natural parent, guaranteed it a solid position, while simultaneously the house and yard, which are the exclusive domain of the individual family, fragmented cultivation and private appropriation of harvests, gives an advantage to the individuality which is incompatible with the system of more primitive communities." (9)

Now we can see that, for Marx, the change to communism could only be realized if the person was emancipated as a community and as an individuality. The reduction of communism to a society where society is emancipated, but where the individual only lives through it,

7. ibid. German ed. p. 377, English ed. p. 473.

8. Marx Oeuvres: Economie II (Gallimard, Paris, 1968) p. 1563, draft III. The drafts were written in French and this French edition is a compendium of the three drafts. A similar English edition is found in The Russian Menace to Europe ed. P.W. Blackstock and B.F. Hose-litz (Glencoe, Ill., 1952) pp. 218-26. Citations are translated here from the French edition, Roman numerals referring to the number of the draft.

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i.e. is not liberated, comes from the vision of the barracks-communism Engels wrote on in his polemic with Tkachev. On the other hand, Chernyshevsky wanted to save the obshchina because it would be possible to accomplish the two closely tied liberations through it. Marx found the solution to the question he implicitly posed in 1858 in Chernyshevsky and the Russian populists.

The dualism allowed two evolutions because, one must underline, the dissolution of the commune was not a fatality:

"Its innate dualism allows an alternative: either its property element will prevail over the collective one, or the latter over the former. It all depends on the historical environment." (10)

In any case:

"The Russian revolution is needed to save the Russian commune." (11)

The question of the Slav state was not analysed in this text, nor in the Forms preceding capitalist production. However, Marx indicated the relation between the Gemeinwesen and the state in the latter. In the secondary formation, where there is private property, there was a split between the state and communal property and it was the state that became the representative of the Gemeinwesen. Thus politics was born in Athens, its essence being representation. However, the state could equally well be produced without there being classes, e.g. with the Incas, as Marx showed. In this case there was a hierarchical community. The state, produced by the transformation of the Gemeinwesen, had a fundamental role in its defence and in ensuring its continuity at all levels. There was a biological type of division of labour: the state played the role of the social brain. The society resulting from such an organization was more of the animal than the human type, a society where the species was despotic and eliminated all the human individuals-particles. This is the case where man did not effectively succeed in cutting the link with nature and creating a discontinuity: he is readSORBED by it.

This was not the case in Russia, but the state imposed itself on the small communities all the same, and this was aided by their isolation making them vulnerable. On the other hand:

"The federation of the North Russian republics proved that this isolation, seemingly imposed originally by the vast extent of land, was largely consolidated by the political fate Russia had suffered since the Mongol invasion." (12)

Marx insisted on the question at length (he also cited the destruction of Novgorod by the Muscovites in the Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century, a collection of articles against Russia and the English diplomacy supporting it). The state in Russia justified itself above all by its defensive role against other communities and, later, against other states: the Tsar was the protector. The considerable importance of the military question in the destiny of Russia was directly related to its social structure: to maintain its existence, the state required that the agrarian communities did not grow. Thus the despotism over society: the state justified its existence by means of territorial expansion. Russian expansionism

Was constant from the sixteenth century. Russia has since continued to grow and its expansionist spirit has not diminished at all up to our time. Also the character of the protector was to create an enormous inertia in the peasant masses and some populists remarked that the great peasant revolts could only develop through usurpation (a kind of justification) which led them also to act as usurpers.

Russian expansionism:
German print of
Muscovite
atrocities
in Livonia
(Nurnberg,
1561)



What was determinant in any case was that the state had an exogenous origin even though the endogenous conditions had evidently favoured its grafting onto the social body. Hence Marx's essential remark:

"What threatens the life of the Russian commune is neither an historical necessity, nor a theory. It is the oppression by the state and the exploitation by capitalist interlopers empowered by the efforts and at the expense of the peasants by the same state." (13)

Now this, let us repeat, had been perfectly understood by the populists. But before tackling the relation of the state to the obshchina, let us draw out some previous consequences. To save the community and to avoid the infamy of the CMP in Russia, the revolution was required. It is very clear that, given that the country had a mainly peasant population, they would play a great revolutionary role. Thus one cannot use Marx's writings on the French peasants to understand the Russian phenomenon. This does not mean that the Russian peasants formed a real class comparable to the proletariat. Their unity arose from the fact that they conserved a past form necessary for future development, for the regeneration of the human community. They were very different, in this sense, to the proletarians as bearers of the

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future, having broken with the past which, in fact, had been expropriated from them. It was a case of a revolution with a classist characteristics in Russia. The classist characteristics were applied to it by the international context when it became clear that, after 1880, the Russian revolution could only triumph if supported by the proletarian revolution in the West. But Marx did not purely and simply eliminate the possibility of Russia accomplishing the revolution itself, using the technological advances of the West. This is another essential characteristic of the drafts of the letter to Zasulich, that the:

"...contemporaneous existence of (capitalist) production in the West allows Russia to incorporate all the positive acquisitions elaborated by the capitalist system into the commune without going through capitalism's Caudine Forks." (14)

This was Chernyshevsky's perspective.

On the other hand, in the event of a general victory of the revolution in Russia and the West, one would be able to talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But would this term well translate the reality for Russia, especially so if the victory only occurred there and was delayed in the West? Could one talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat during this delay? These questions also depended on the historical circumstances (Lenin's formula; democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry was compatible enough with that of Marx and the populists). But these questions were not studied fully for the agrarian commune no longer had any importance for the marxists after the end of the last century.

Concerning the state (a state stronger than society, as Wittfogel said), the populists had understood its particularities, as Plekhanov's quotes of them in Our Differences showed:

"(The state) does not embody the interest of any estate... In our country...on the contrary, our social form owes its existence to the state, to a state hanging, so to speak, in the air, a state which has nothing in common with the existing social order, whose roots are in the past, not in the present." (15)

This is from Tkachev who, even if he was not a populist - he was considered to be a Jacobin, appreciated the obshchina in common with them (16). But the populists noted that the power of the state did not persist only in the air because it rested on, among other things, the Tsar-cult deeply rooted in the peasantry. Tkachev was right otherwise. Bondage was introduced by the Tsar, so too was wage-labour. Miliukov was not wrong either when he remarked that if classes had produced the state in the West, in Russia the state produced the classes. Hence the populists's continual preoccupation: destroy the state. That is why they always wanted to suppress the Tsar:

14. *ibid.* p. 1566 III

15. Selected Philosophical Works (London, 1961) Vol. I pp. 179-80.

16. Nor could one call Bakunin a populist. He always considered the obshchina to be very important and had a great influence on the populist movement between 1860 and 1870. (Cf. in this respect Venturi's book named in the next footnote).

"The man really responsible is the Tsar; Russian history shows this. It is the Tsars who thorough the centuries have gradually built up the organization of the state, and the army; it is they who have handed out land to the nobles. Think carefully about it, brothers, and you will see that the Tsar is the first of the nobles." (Karakozov) (17)

Here they agreed both with Marx and the anarchists. Now, curiously enough, Bordiga's explanation converged with the populist's analytical scheme when he remarked that what dominated in the USSR was not an indigenous class, but the international class; the hideous soviet state being a despotic organization at its service.

The importance of the state also explains two fundamental traits of the Russian revolutionaries: their exacerbated will to destroy the state, mobilize the peasants and everything would fall into gear, and also a kind of fatalism which easily led them to collaborate with the existing powers after a phase of exaltation. Fatalism and voluntarism are often linked, the substate here being Tsarist despotism.

Engels did not fully maintain Marx's positions, particularly on the leaping of the CMP, and he tended to believe at the end of his life that exchange value was too developed in Russia and that the country was condemned to capitalism all the same. He thus opened the door to Plekhanov and Lenin.

One should note that in the decade 1890-1900, when Engels disappeared and Lenin wrote his first works, there was a particular situation. The agrarian commune had been fragmented, but the CMP was not really implanted. This created a number of problems for the populists who were supplanted by the marxists who stated that it was impossible to leap over the CMP (Plekhanov). It was with him that the primary role of the proletariat in the Russian revolution appeared in a thesis:

"In conclusion I repeat - and I insist on this important point; the revolutionary movement in Russia will triumph only as a working class movement or else it will never triumph!" (18)

Plekhanov's position on this determined the development of Russian marxism. Lenin dedicated all his youthful activity to the struggle against the populists. Basically he stated that Marx could

17. Cited in Venturi Roots of Revolution: a history of the populist and socialist movements in nineteenth century Russia (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1960). This work is of exceptional significance for understanding the profound characteristics of the Russian revolution. One previously knew the great sympathy that Marx and Engels (especially the former) had for the populists through their letters to them. But the populists' real positions were unknown, except by some specialists. With Venturi's book the mystification-mythification practised by the Russian marxists on their adversaries was torn aside. Populism is clearly and integral part of the communist movement, which Venturi states in other terms. Cf. p. 346.

18. 'Speech at the International Workers' Socialist Congress in Paris (2nd. version) 14.-21.7.1889.' in Plekhanov op. cit. p. 454.

26.

not be invoked on Russian development as he had not studied the subject in depth. In fact he cited Marx's letter to Mikhailovsky:

"And so Marx said that Mr. Mikhailovsky had no right to regard him as an opponent of the idea of Russia's special line of development because he also respected those who held this idea; but Mr. Krivenko misconstrues this to mean that Marx "admitted" this special line of development. This is an out-and-out distortion. Marx's statement quoted above shows quite clearly that he evaded the question as such...Marx, in this very same "letter", gave a direct reply to the question of how his theory could be applied to Russia. This reply very clearly shows that Marx avoided answering the question as such, avoided examining Russian data, which alone could decide the question." (19)

Now there is nothing more incorrect. Marx studied Russian social evolution very attentively, learning Russian to do so. Moreover, this study had to be fundamental (as too with the study of the US agrarian structure) so as to explain how the change from landed property to capital occurred. For the USA he analysed Wakefield's theory in Capital, explaining its importance in the Grundrisse. For Russia his studies were very large, but what he was able to do remained unpublished.

Lenin had already shown his theoretical rigidity, which could also be called his unilinearism, against the populists. He refused to envisage the particularities of Russia's unique development in a correct, full, and concrete fashion. Later he was even to deny to the so-called left communists, e.g. Gorter, that there was a particular evolution of the West and the fact that one could not transfer the Russian scheme, that the tactic and strategy could not be the same there.

So, returning to the polemic with the populists, Lenin only maintained the second possibility of evolution indicated by Marx:

"...and Marx says that 'if' she was so tending, she would have to transform a good part of her peasants into proletarians." (20)

This was made a certainty in The Development of Capitalism in Russia, reinforcing his earlier conclusion-solution:

"...- then the Russian WORKER, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT (side by side with the proletariat of ALL COUNTRIES) along the straight road of open political struggle to THE VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION." (21)

However, the peasant revolts of 1902, the formation of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (a compromise between populism and Russian Marxism marking the retreat of the populist movement defending the obshchina (22)), greatly influenced Lenin's evolution. From then on

19. 'What the Friends of the People' are and how they fight the Social-Democrats' in Collected Works (Moscow, 1960) Vol. I p. 300

20. *ibid.* p. 266 21. *ibid.* p. 300

22. The 1905 revolution restarted the populist movement. The proof was the formation of the 'Union of Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries in 1906 which rejected the socialist party minimum programme

he plainly stated The Revolutionary-Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry (an article written in March 1905 (23)). It was specified, supported and founded in Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution (1905) and especially in The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the first Russian Revolution of 1905-7. Here there is a break in Lenin's position in relation to that in earlier works (Bordiga did not attach much importance to this particular moment and papered it over; on one hand he was not interested in The Development of Capitalism in Russia, on the other he concentrated especially on the coherence between Two Tactics... and The April Theses, which was correct but insufficient). Lenin recognized that he had overestimated the degree of capitalist development in agriculture (24), but, all the same, Russia still had only one path before it: the path of bourgeois development (25). However, for that an agrarian revolution was needed:

"Only a peasant revolution could quickly transform wooden Russia into iron Russia." (26)

Lenin tended to accord the peasants their own revolutionary role and not to make them into a mass for manoeuvre. Hence the slogan of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry took on a further dimension: affirmation of the two essential classes for the revolutionary transformation of Russia. Starting from this fact, Lenin, who had dedicated a great number of works to the agrarian question, was to follow the creation of the social relations in agriculture in a thorough fashion and, thus, he made a real return to Marx (this question was determinant in Russia as the national one had been in Germany). Thus a break was made regarding the appreciation of the role of the peasantry following the 1905 revolution. It had been much to polarized until then, on all sides, over the question of organization. There had been theological squabbles over the question which had only been a consequence of taking positions on the fundamental ideas of the revolution. Thus, after 1905, the legal marxists definitely sank into a clique of those who not only dreamt of capitalism, as Marx said, but oriented all their activity towards a bourgeois revolution of the western type. On the other hand, Lenin had understood (perhaps fully) the importance of the peasant phenomenon in Russia, while Trotsky envisaged the peasants as troops of the revolution and especially did not understand (or perhaps only in 1917, as Bordiga indicated) that it was a case of making the bourgeois revolution in the Russian revolution, in the proletarian manner, even if the proletariat became the lead-

and wanted a 'workers' republic' and to organize society on the basis of the community, inspired by the obshchina. (Cf. Anweiler The Soviets: the Russian Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils 1905-21 (New York, 1974) pp. 94-5.)

On the 1871 Commune and its appreciation by the various Russian revolutionaries, as well as the influence it had on them, see A. Lehning Anarchisme et Marxisme dans la révolution Russe.

23. Collected Works Vol. 8 pp. 293-303 24. ibid. Vol. 13 p. 291

25. ibid. p. 238

26. ibid. p. 403

ing force (this was theoretically true from the moment when the possibility of a leap over the CMP seemed to have been eliminated).

"We have but one task: to rally the proletariat for the socialist revolution, to support every fight against the old order in the most resolute way, to fight for the best possible conditions for the proletariat in the developing bourgeois society." (27)

From the moment of the admission of the dissolution of the community and even the necessity for it (as Lenin wished), then the question of how the productive forces would develop posed itself: how would capital develop in this vast area. It was no more a question of leaping over capitalism, but of how it would develop. Capital Vol. II had to be taken as a reference point and the polemic really arose from whether an internal market could be constituted in Russia and if capital would not have to take recourse to external markets to realize surplus-value. Struve, Turgan-Baranowski, Lenin and also Rosa Luxemburg, among others, took part in this polemic. Marx was interpreted in a literal and immediate manner. Capital Vol. II, section 3 was in no way meant to show that capitalism could always develop or that it had to do so according to the schemas of simple and enlarged reproduction. (Nor does it show the opposite.) Marx studied the conditions of capital reproduction and the possibilities of crisis and so he showed the difficulties that capital meets in carrying through its process: e.g. disequilibrium between the two sectors, overproduction of fixed capital, over-rapid contraction or expansion in the turnover period etc.. He also studied the fundamental condition for superseding these difficulties: the creation of the credit system. Volume II as a whole is a demonstration of the necessity for this creation (which Hilferding understood in Finance Capital, but he did not know how to draw the consequences of it). Marx studied the possibilities of capital's development, but it was only in Volume III that he approached concrete forms, i.e. those in operation. Here he also arrived at the threshold of the resolution of the problem of the way in which capital can absorb its contradictions and thus aim at posing itself as eternal: fictitious capital. Now this can only develop if credit is generalized in all its forms.

This study of the reproduction of capital also shows at what point the development of Russian social-democracy was linked to that in the West: at what point the Russians gave a new impulse to the theoretical debates inside the Second International, even if their position had lost its depth in relation to the populists with whom Marx agreed, after the abandonment of the perspective of the leap.

Marx's work underwent an important modification from then on. It was pushed into the rank of a theory of development and growth, codified in the name of marxism. Everything archaic and Asiatic had to be eliminated over the whole huge empire (and, given that the revolutionary flood affected the peripheral countries, it took on a global importance), and the capitalist form had to be allowed to

flower. Marx's Capital was invoked as an explanation. Thus the populist's positions were now only considered as relics of the past, daily becoming more reactionary. Their irreparable anti-despotic and anti-Tsarist positions were occluded. The ground was thus prepared for the reconciliation of the intelligensia with capital, previously considered as an inferno. Trotsky wrote in an article for the 25th. anniversary of Neue Zeit (1908) that the marxist doctrine served to reconcile the Russian intelligensia with capitalist development. One can see why Gramsci, who had seen only a part of the phenomenon: its arrival, and who probably did not know Marx's position on Russia, wrote in 1917 that the Russian revolution triumphed against Marx's Capital. He was wrong, but he said something true.

Marxism, as a theory of growth created by legal marxism (and, to an extent, by legal populism), then accepted by the Mensheviks, was taken over by the Bolsheviks. It was greatly developed in the Bukharin-Preobrazhensky polemics on socialist accumulation, then somehow it consolidated its dominant existence following the debate on the economic growth of such countries as China, India, Cuba, and Algeria after their revolutions or independence, to such an extent that it now dominates in the factories and universities. In fact one has to come to Trotsky's clear statement in, e.g. The Revolution Betrayed (28), but which was already implicit in Lenin: socialism will allow production to increase and will show its superiority to capitalism here, to stating that the growth of the productive forces is socialism: stalinism, khruschevism, trotskyism. Thus one sees that the theory of communism as the emulation of capitalism, which budded with Lenin, flowered with Trotsky. It is an irony of emulation which made Rostow excrete a theory of growth, a theology of taking-off, while wishing to write an anti-manifesto (The Stages of Economic Growth). Facetious convergence!

This theory of growth, historical materialism, was not exclusively a contemporary Russian product. One finds it in Italy defended in Antonio Labriola's The Materialist Conception of History. It postulates the primary importance of economic facts, material facts in general, a scientific vision coupled with the glorification of the proletariat and the exaltation of its dictatorship. It was basically at the beginning of this century that the ideology of the proletariat having to become the ruling class was best expressed. The proletariat had to direct the world economic process, but with economic organizations. Sorel explained that remarkably in Material for the Theory of the Proletariat, and strikingly in Ruin of the Ancient World:

28. "With the bourgeois economists we no longer have anything to quarrel over. Socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not in the pages of Das Kapital, but in an industrial arena comprising a sixth part of the earth's surface - not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity." (1937 ed. p. 8). That shows very clearly where there is no difference between capitalism and socialism for Trotsky.

"The proletariat does not wish to go under whatever yoke again, it despises the dry theories of bourgeois revolutionary logic, it constructs its own body and rises against the old class organization. This is because it has made all alone creations that are its own, in its trades, that it can try to dissolve the state's forces, transferring to its unions all they can take of public administration." (29)

"Socialism returns to ancient thought; but the warrior of the city has become the worker of great industry, arms are replaced by machines. Socialism is a philosophy of producers: that could teach the Gospel addressed to mendicants." (30)

Nowadays it is not the economic organizations that are praised, but the productive apparatus. The most modern socialists are those who are the most rational in expressing the integration of the working class, of the interiorization of capital's domination, as Serge Malet shows in his article Will the Working Class Disappear? (31)

"If one means by 'revolutionary' consciousness, in the classic sense of the term, the will to seize political power by whatever means and whatever the price, then to organize society in a new manner only later on, it is incontestable that the new working-class is no longer revolutionary. It is not revolutionary in these conditions because it poses a preliminary condition for the transformation of the existing structures. This must not be done at the price of the destruction of the productive apparatus, or even its serious diminution - 'The machine is too expensive to be broken.'"

Kautsky thought the same in 1919: don't fuck about with money! Now, after May 1968, what is the revolution for many people? In his introduction to Sorel, Berth ouidid him in concluding:

"The city can only be rebuilt on the basis of labour playing the role formerly assumed by war in the heroic city. The hero of antiquity and the medieval saints and the modern citizen must be superseded by the social worker."

Sorel even proposed an ethic he extracted from Marx; "I have already said that to analyse critically our consciousness, we must recover the machines. K. Marx, who saw so well the importance of industrial equipment, could not but look for the basic principle of the ethic in the human phenomenon which developed around the machine." (32)

We are very far from Marx's proclaimed demand of the abolition of the proletariat! The checking of the revolutionary movement at the beginning of the century is also the raising of the proletariat as ruling class on the basis of economic organizations which also implies the impossibility of the dictatorship of the proletariat seen as a long post-communist revolution phase.

Karl Korsch, in Marxism and Philosophy, asked if marxism as the

29. Editions Riviere, 1933 p. 318 30. ibid. p. 311

31. Realites, June 1971

32. The Old and the New Metaphysic quoted by Berth in his introduction to Sorel op. cit. p. xiv.

product of the revolution would not be inadequate for a counter-revolutionary period, and he criticized Kautsky who stated that texts like the 1864 Address and the 'Introduction' to Class Struggles in France (1895) would allow a "'broadening'" into a "'theory valid not only for revolutionary phases but also for non revolutionary periods'." (33). He stated in opposition:

"'Marxism', while formally accepted by the workers' movement, was from the start not a true theory, in the sense of being 'nothing other than a general expression of the real historical movement' (Marx)." and:

"...that the subsequent practical progress of the proletariat has, as it were, lagged behind its own theory..." (34)

This 'discrepancy' was very clear in the SPD. These remarks are very interesting concerning Russia. From the end of the last century, following the defeat of the Zemlya i Volya and the Narodnaya Volya and a certain diminution in peasant revolts, but a certain growth of the workers' movement, the old perspective of the leap over the CMP seemed to have become absolutely impossible. How could the proletariat act, how would it join the revolutionary movement in Russia and Europe? Here we must add the concept of representation to Korsch's analysis and say that, thanks to Marx, the proletariat could represent itself concretely in the overall production process. It will find itself praised there and its intermediate action justified. Put another way, the theory expressing the movement of the working class during its attack on capital was transformed into an ideology. Marx's work became marxism with the elimination of the populist currents. This is also completely true for the West. The counter-revolutionary phase and the development of the CMP (lack of catastrophic crisis) poses the validity of an action of the proletariat and that of its insertion into the CMP. How could the proletariat represent its development inside society and simultaneously (at the beginning, before its inclusion in society) continue to struggle for its final objective? In fact, the proletariat rapidly dissolved itself into the intermediary movement which should have been the simple mediation for its arrival at communism: the development of the productive forces, thus of capital. A note by Plekhanov in his Essay on the Development of the Monist Conception of History very clearly explained the simultaneous transformation in Russia and the West and their mutual interaction:

"I have the activity of the social-democrats in mind here. They have contributed to capitalism's progress by suppressing outdated productive forces such as cottage industry. Bebel summed up the attitude of western social-democracy to capitalism very well at the Breslau Congress of 1895. 'I always ask, regarding whatever measure, if it is damaging to capitalism's progress. If it is, I am against it.'" (35)

Communism as a movement and a theory demanded the destruction of

33. Marxism and Philosophy (London, 1970) p. 97

34. ibid. p. 102 & p. 101

35. Philosophical Works (French edition) Vol. I, p. 874, fn. 61

the proletariat. Now, in the counter-revolutionary phase, the proletariat was lead to exalt its number and organization in order to be able to resist. However, this was not necessarily ill-omened and could, for a certain period, allow the awaiting, even the acceleration, of the movement of the return to the revolution, to the extent that the final goal of the maximum programme was not hidden. But this is evidently the basis of the start of justifying the inclusion of the proletariat in capitalist society. This was possible only during the formal domination of capital over society or, while the proletariat was still absorbed in the production process, it still had some lee-way in free time when it was not at work.

Theory is a movement. Ideology is what autonomizes itself from the movement and can have its own movement in the sphere of representation. Following its dissociation from the being (proletariat), it becomes a thing (reification of the theory) that can be transferred. Importing marxism into the proletariat was Lenin's answer in What is to be done?.

Another component of the ideologization is the acceptance of science, positivism, and the importation of classic bourgeois materialism, which considerably influenced Lenin, as Korsch showed. But the West too was not spared this disease and there was a reciprocal infection. Kautsky in Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History (1906) made marxism a social-darwinism. Also the critiques of Lenin, by Pannekoek, for example, definitely developed a neo-positivist and not a communist position, coherent with Marx. One must note the great role Marx accorded to science as an ideology and not as a productive force. Positivism is especially evident in what are called the developing countries. There was a real infatuation with it in Brazil at the turn of the century. The science-cult and that of progress allowed for the replacement of the old religious conceptions, which were really a brake on the development of capitalism.

The science-cult, with the accompanying illusion of being able to dominate it and technique (cf, what Lenin wrote on taylorism, and Bordiga, by defending Lenin, allowed himself to be reabsorbed by the ruling ideology), finally culminated in the cult of rationality, in the pretence of disciplining the productive forces and in the domination of nature - all correlates of the ideology of growth. One of the first manifestations of the science of human manipulation occurred in Russia at the same time: Pavlov's theory of conditioned or acquired reflexes. (It was no accident that this emerged in the USSR.) This science increased greatly, as Solzhenitsyn showed in The First Circle, with also the various psychiatric detentions which praied this all the time. Another aspect of the utopia of capital, described by Zamiatin in 1920, has tended to be realized in the USSR: conditioning men in order to remove all their imagination. This becomes capital's property which organizes men. One should note the anticipation We is the starting point of this science fiction describing the rational despotism of societies realizing the utopia of capital. Almost thirty years later, 1984 by Orwell, born following a social defeat, echoed this future un-

happiness.

The great development of positivism and of materialism, the content of capitalism, caused the revitalization of religion. There were always religious sects in Russia opposed to the autocratic power. The populists allied with the raskolniki several times to reinforce their struggle against tsarism. Presently religion allows a human demonstration against capital because God is a human product. Thanks to him, man can still save his being from the evil embrace of capital. Religion in Russia and the People's Democracies has conserved its old role with the struggle against capital grafted on to it. Similarly in Latin America, while in Europe and the USA it is the second aspect that is significant. Also, the God that is wanted more and more is the one with Feuerbach's face.

All this is still insufficient for judging the social transformation of Russia at the turn of the century. To specify the mutation, real or not, we must return to the periodization of the CMP, as we have already done. Marx distinguished formal domination (or formal subsumption of labour under capital) and real domination (or real subsumption of labour under capital) in the immediate production process in Capital Vol. I (36) and especially in Results of the Immediate Process of Production. The great difference between them resides in the fact that in the former there is the production of absolute surplus-value, while in the latter there is the production of relative surplus-value. Production of the second requires capital to modify the old labour process; instead of merely dominating it, capital must make it operate according to its own rationality. The labour process is transformed into the labour process for capital, the process of capitalist production.

This is important with the antediluvian forms of capital such as merchants' and usurers' capital. Marx said of the latter:

"But it does not intervene in the process of production itself, which proceeds in the traditional fashion, as it has always done."

Capital cannot autonomize itself. It is always at the mercy of political power or human revolt. Marx added:

"In part it thrives on the withering away of this mode of production, in part it is a means to make it wither away, to force it to eke out a vegetable existence in the most unfavourable conditions. But here we have not yet reached the stage of the formal subsumption of labour under capital." (37)

Also, even if labour has been subsumed under capital in certain areas, its domination could be questioned. In any case, with Russia the kulak appeared most often (and is so described) as a usurer and not as a capitalist farmer. The kulak lived inside the commune and exploited its poorest elements to his profit. He used money, but this was not yet capital, it was at the very most the third form of money, money as money, a form of transition to capital. Engels indicated the social form of the kulak in his letter to Danielson:

36. Capital Vol. I cit. p. 645.

37. Results... (appendix to Capital cit.) p. 1023.



The mir in the nineteenth century. Above: the mir pictured by an English traveller (J.A. Atkinson) in 1803. Below: poor peasant and kulak arguing in A meeting of the mir by S.A. Korovin (1893).



"...the kulaki too, as far as I can see, on the whole prefer keeping the peasant in their clutches as a sujet à exploitation, to ruining him once for all and getting his land transferred to them. So that it strikes me, the Russian peasant, where he is not wanted as a wokman for the factory or the town, will also die hard, will take a great deal of killing..." (38)

Here Engels was really prophetic. But Lenin assimilated the kulak with the American farmer too quickly, allowing him to theorize two evolutions for Russian agriculture: one Prussian, the other Ameri-

an (cf. The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy). This capitalist interpretation was to be applied to the Nepmen, considered as real capitalists. These analytical errors were to weigh heavily on the development of the Russian revolution and the soviet peasantry too: violence and rural terror. The famous dekulakization was an attempt to impose capitalist development forcibly by removing the obstacle of usury (cf. Capital Vol. III). But this led, as we can see through Bordiga's work, to the reconstruction of the mir: the mir as it could have been before the revolution when it dissolved itself.

Put another way, Marx's puzzlement, and that of many populists too, over the possibility of a real development of capital in Russia was fully justified. The agrarian structure linked to very specific geographical conditions was an obstacle to capital.

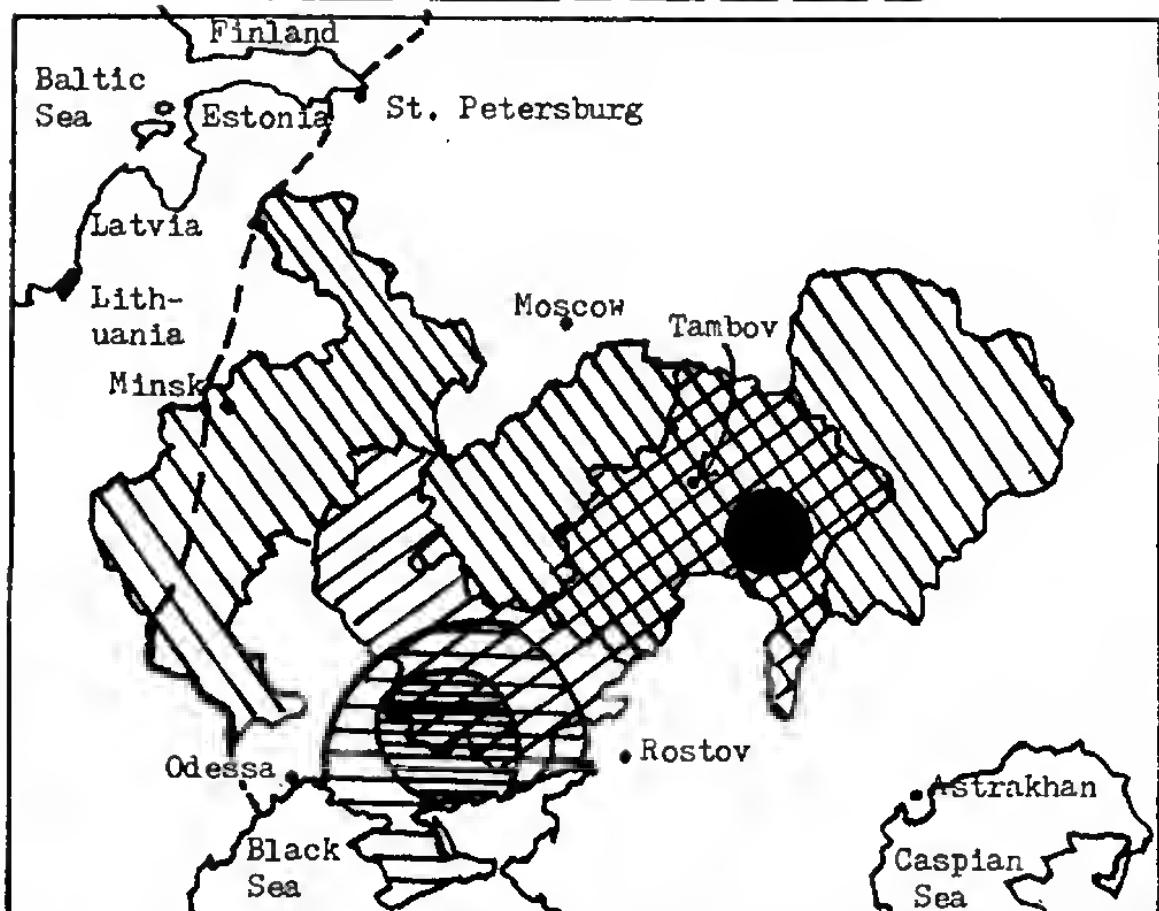
Even in the case of capital dominating the production process (one should note that in 1917 many Petrograd workers maintained important links with the countryside and that they were thus not totally proletarianized), its existence was not assured on a social level. Its development was already conditioned by the transformation of the old circulation process of capital which united it with the immediate production process, constituting the global production process of capital. That is why we have extended the range of Marx's concepts and we have talked of capital's formal and real domination over society. Real domination is achieved when all the social presuppositions have been transformed, when they are posed by capital itself. This occurs when capital becomes the material community and accomplishes the process of anthropomorphosis and poses itself as the fictitious community. This is not to say that there would be a total and absolute domination which would imply the end to any possibility of struggle by men.

This is why it seems to be very wrong to us to say that the capitalist mode of production dominated in Russia in 1917. If one states that then one also has to state that the revolution would have had to have been communist because it would tend to realize communism directly. Thus the victory of the Bolsheviks is totally inexplicable for those who defend the thesis of pursuing the bourgeois revolution in the proletarian manner (the overgrowth depending on the West).

The answer lies in the pure and simple papering over of the Bolsheviks' actions and the peasant problem. One says that there was the CMP at the start and at the end. There was no revolution, but a kind of overthrow instead supported by the Bolsheviks, among others. They were allowed to maintain the CMP by their managerial views. However, logic is not fully respected because one would have to define the Bolsheviks as reactionaries from the start and to say that there ought and could have been a revolutionary movement. But, illogic compounded, some recognize that there was a realization of democratic tasks when the CMP was already dominant!

If one says that the Russian revolution was bourgeois (considering the CMP as dominant at all times), one immediately has to clarify that it was a political revolution which allowed Russia to gain

Peasants' Revolts in 1905 and 1917-21



Centre of peasants' revolts in 1905.



Centre and maximum extent of the Makhno movement 1918-21.

Provinces with 60% of rural unrest March-April 1917.



Centre of the Antonov movement 1920-21.



1920 Western frontier — — —

a state equivalent to the contemporary economic structure. This is the only way to avoid falling into the contradiction:

"The political soul of the revolution, on the other hand, consists in the tendency of classes having no political influence to abolish their isolation from statehood and rule. Its point of view is that of the state, of an abstract whole, which exists only through separation from real life, and which is inconceivable without the organized contradiction between the universal idea of man and the universal existence of man. Hence, too, a revolution with a political soul, in accordance with the limited and dichotomous nature of this soul, organizes a ruling stratum in society at the expense of society itself." (39)

The statement of the necessity of the revolution which was only

39. Critical Marginal Notes on the Article 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform' by a Prussian in Marx Engels Collected Works Vol. III (Moscow, 1975) p. 205.

political allowed Trotsky to save his theory of permanent revolution. For if something revolutionary and socialist remained in Russia, there would only have to be the completion of the work: hence the permanence of the revolution. But supporting a political revolution in the USSR is to support the permanence of a dominant sphere at the expense of the society. This is not incompatible with Trotsky's wandering for it is to conceive of society on the road to communism as being identical to bourgeois society.

There was in fact the formal domination of the production process conceived at the level of the whole of society. Capital had by no means abolished the old presuppositions, in agriculture above all. Now we can say that capital in Russia has not reached a real domination because it has yet to achieve a domination over agriculture and this confirms Marx's forecast that Russia inevitably would have to pass from exporting to importing cereals after the 1861 reform and that it would undergo periodic crises (40). It is clear that the pressure of American competition (Latin American countries, but especially the USA) played the role of freezing Russian agriculture (41).

Also, when Bordiga defined the Russian state as a state of kolkhoze peasants and world capital, that explained the continued frailty of the CMP in the USSR. One could say that the kolkhozians played the role of usurers in another form!

This still does not exhaust our enquiry into the destiny of the Russian commune. Was it or was it not still alive after 1917? This greatly conditions our appreciation of the Bolsheviks' positions. Let us make a small detour in our reply so as to recall that during all revolutionary processes there are two important phenomena which are, to a certain extent, opposed: the phenomenon of the overgrowth, which we shall return to, and the reappearance of the contradictions, blows and conflicts which have been forgotten because it was thought that they had been resolved. Now, as Marx showed, the development of exchange value does not resolve but incorporates contradictions. Capital proceeds similarly. Thus, following a crisis, disequilibrium or shattering of the reigning system, the re-emergence of the contradictions simply incorporated can occur. It is possible that old human modes of behaviour reappear, especially in areas where domestication by capital has not attained an historical dimension. That is to say that even if the statistics showed the disappearance of the obshchina in 1917, that does not lessen the problem of its revitalization due to the revolutionary irruption itself.

Lenin saw part of this in 1918 and 1919 (cf. the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party). He insisted on the resurgence of

40. This cannot be dealt with here. We can note that Engels foresaw at the end of the last century that a world war would end in the ruin of Europe and domination by US agriculture.

41. We dealt with this question in an article entitled The Russian Agricultural Crisis has a Social Origin in il programma comunista no. 18, 1965.

38.

the old forms. However, he only analysed the phenomenon from the point of view of capital's development and not from that of the obshchina (the two not being mutually exclusive). Could not the latter revive once the huge tsarist apparatus (which specifically hindered all development of the communities) was crippled by the Tsar's removal, then totally disorganized by the unleashing of the rural struggles? Russians lost their old community after 1861, which has been stated by many writers, but it has not been replaced by a stable form of organization and capital has developed at most formally in some areas.

That those communities could revive is most interesting for understanding a way in which the Russian revolution could have continued and thus bring a judgement of the whole of it. The central tsarist power was grafted onto the small communities, as we have seen. When it disappeared, the community of the world proletariat (dictatorship of the proletariat) would be able to assist the coming of communism harmoniously, i.e. non-violently, vis à vis the contemporary torments of the USSR. The revitalization of the communities is not a gratuitous hypothesis. Engels wrote this on Poland:

"In Poland, particularly in the Grodno gubernia, where the nobility for the most part was ruined by the rebellion of 1863, the peasants now frequently buy or rent estates from the nobles and cultivate them unpartitioned and on their collective account. And those peasants have not had communal ownership for centuries and are not Great Russians, but Poles, Lithuanians and Byelorussians." (42)

In general, one could say that as far as capital has not succeeded in transforming man and producing another species, there are human invariables which are evidently hidden, more especially when capital's domination is older. Moreover, these invariables undergo geographical influences, thus there is the invariant tendency to return to the community which is stronger and more persistent in zones where the prevailing conditions make the autonomization of the individual difficult. That is why men and women could undertake a reconquest and creation of their life at a world level from the moment that the material community and the fictitious community will have been destroyed. The tendency to form the human community will certainly be very strong in the USSR because of what we have just said on that country's history.

The persistence and even the revitalization of the agrarian commune in Russia has been stated by the specialist on slavonic matters, P. Pascal:

"The commune was not dead after the revolution." (43)

He stated that it was still alive in 1966.

Evidently one would not be able to draw solid conclusions from the few remarks the author made in the book. However, there are other direct and indirect accounts providing proof of the revital-

42. On Social Relations in Russia in Marx Engels Selected Works in two vols. Vol. II (Moscow, 1958) p. 58, fn. 2.

43. Civilisation Paysanne en Russie (Lausanne, 1969) p. 25.

ization of the commune. Volin gives some in The Unknown Revolution, but they are simple allusions on which one can base nothing.

Trotsky's account is especially interesting due to his thoroughly marxist position. He wrote in History of the Russian Revolution:

"At the same time there begins a movement of the communal peasants against the individual landowners - against the strong peasants, that is, who had detached themselves and taken up individual holdings on the basis of Stolypin's law of November 9, 1906." (44)

This clearly expresses the peasants' desire to reconstitute the obshchina, which Trotsky does not raise: he was astonished that the poor peasants could seek out the kulaks to go and pillage the nobles' mansions together. The kulaks were still in the community. Its power impressed him nonetheless.

"In Kursk province there began a persecution of the individual settlers who had refused to return to the commune. In the hour of its great land revolution, its 'Black Division', the peasantry wanted to act as a single whole. Inner distinctions might prove an obstacle: the commune must stand forth as one man. The fight for the landlord's land was therefore accompanied by acts of violence against the separate farmer - the land individualist." (45)

Stolypin's reform was the sole significant one to make the CMP penetrate agriculture through state intervention instead of allowing the elemental economic mechanisms act. Trotsky's text shows the will of the commune to regain its totality and to redefine itself in its integrality. Trotsky's explanation is completely superficial, an attempt to justify his purely classist theory.

Bordiga supported Lenin in Russia and Revolution in Marxist Theory, saying that the agrarian commune was definitely eliminated before 1917, but in Economic and Social Structure of Russia Today he wrote:

"Stolypin's most daring reform of 1906 did not even succeed in establishing a regime of private plots on all agricultural land ... But it is estimated that only a quarter of the collective form of management had been liquidated by the eve of the great war." (46)

That is quite close to what the historian Carmichael wrote.

This remark of Bordiga's also explains why Lenin always spoke of starting the class struggle in the countryside (a theme taken up by Stalin in 1928) in order to increase the productive forces on one hand, and on the other, to destroy the kulaks' power. When Lenin wrote:

"To divide the peasantry and win over the non-kulak elements will require a lot of time." (47)

did that not mean that the obshchina persisted despite the fact

44. Vol. I (London, 1932) pp. 402-3 45. ibid. p. 406

46. Cf. fn. 12, p. 7 (Reprinted Milan, 1976, p. 502.)

47. 'Speech delivered at the Third All-Russian Trade Union Congress' 7.4.20. in Collected Works Vol. 30, p. 509.

40.

that the statistics did not record it as such? Later he noted that there had been an alliance with the peasants on the economic level in 1921 for the first time (48). Lenin's evolution regarding the peasantry shows itself in changes in the formula "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry", which became the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry", then the "dictatorship of the proletariat...supported by the poor peasants or semi-proletarians" (49).

This is not decisive, but it is sufficient to prescribe a re-examination of the question. This also has to be done with the famous measure of the socialist revolutionary programme, which they could not apply and which the peasants realized directly with the consent and even the help of the Bolsheviks: the land to the peasants. This was the demand of the peasants from the Tsar who had liberated them from servitude, but by imposing redemption payments on them. Now the peasants considered that the land belonged to them, as Plekhanov recalled:

"'We belong to you and the soil belongs to us', the peasants used to say to the landlords." (50)

One cannot state decisively that this proves the petit-bourgeois character of the peasants: their instinct for property. The Tsar gone, they took back their due. Clearly many things had changed in the meantime. The aristocrats and bourgeoisie had succeeded in monopolizing the land, creating many secondary antagonisms. But basically the same happened as with the Commune:

"The Commune - the readorption of the state power by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it..." (51)

The workers reimposed the republic taken from them by the Second Empire. The Russian peasants took back the land and their community which tsarism had taken from them. This could have been the beginning of the reformation of the communities on a higher level, on condition that the peasants were to be supported by the new state, which had to remove the elements harmful to the development of the communes, as Marx had stated in the drafts of his letters to Zasulich. The victory of marxism hindered the realization of this solution. The state was conceived (and acted) as the creator of forms of organization (cf. the creation of the committees of poor peasants in 1918) and not as a vitalizing co-ordinating force for the different communities and of all of them with the cities. It was not the expression of an organic centralism, but a despotic centralism.

Finally, it is probable that the communitarian phenomenon did not emerge with the same intensity throughout (the documents never make a serious ruling), but there were regions where it did happen without a shadow of a doubt - the Ukraine.

48. *ibid.* Vol. 33, pp. 156 & 267 49. *ibid.* Vol. 27 pp. 153 & 178 for this last formula. 50. Plekhanov cit. p. 301

51. Marx 'First Draft of The Civil War in France' in The First International and After (Harmondsworth, 1974) p. 250.

The makhnovshchina would have been impossible without the resistance of the peasants on their communal basis and the data given by Archinov was not really refuted by Trotsky. Trotsky only confirmed negatively the basic characteristics described above in his polemic (Military Writings). The movement was accused of being anarchist and certainly it contained anarchists (they were the only ones to defend and applaud it), but this is only part of the truth because it is to forget that the whole populist movement, the expression of the obshchina, was anti-statist. But we have seen that Russian marxism had lost its populist dimension in its desire to favour capital's development. This was not Marx's position in a draft of the letter to Zasulich:

"Today it is the easiest obstacle (the isolation of the communes favouring the grafting of despotism - ed.) to eliminate. It would simply be necessary to substitute a peasant assembly selected by the communes themselves and serving as an administrative and economic organ of their interests, for the volost, the government institution." (52)

This is what the Ukrainians tried to realize as Archinov explained in his book The Makhnovist Movement.

Another case far more difficult to analyse is that of Kronstadt and the rising in the Tambov gubernia, which is much less known. Thus, after assuming a position on the populists and their incomprehension of Marx's positions on Russia, the Bolsheviks could not understand the phenomenon or integrate it. This was especially so as marxism on the western level saw a progressive element in capitalism that had to be defended. Also, while the marxists opposed capitalism, they could only applaud it because the theme was the same: the development of the productive forces. In fact it was the proletarian class as a whole which was unable to tackle exhaustively the Russian question.

We want to note a last great historical movement which we believe showed the persistence of the community more or less as a behaviour: the forced collectivization of 1929 which Deutscher considered to be a second revolution "even more radical than the first" (53). Now if Deutscher denounced the forced nature of this collectivization, he did note, all the same, an enthusiastic movement at the start:

"The beginning of collectivization was an indubitable success."

(54) which is stated by Broue as well:

"Collectivization operated much less schematically and especially less in a linear fashion in fact. It excited incontestable enthusiasm among the poorest layers of peasants who were then summoned to take up, in a new form, the century old struggle for land of those considered as exploiters (the kulaks - ed.). And one could talk of it, in this sense, as a real peasants' 'October'." (55)

However, one must note that the struggle of the poor peasants

52. Marx op. cit. p. 1567 I

54. ibid. p. 324.

55. Le Parti Bolshevik (Paris, 1963) p. 316

53. Stalin (Oxford, 1967) p. 294

42.

against the kulaks soon became transformed into a struggle against the state. One should also note that often whole villages were bound up with the kulaks. The mujiks inconsistency was therefore due to a deeper reason which could have been defence of the community.

The committees of poor peasants founded in 1918 had been unsuccessful. The peasants replied with apathy (no desire to collaborate on an economic level) over the destruction of their old communitarian relations. That is why they could delude themselves over the nature of collectivization to begin with, but revolted later. But after Stalin released ballast and the kolkhozes were slightly stabilized, he realized the danger of this communitarian resurrection:

"He startled the party by saying that the collective farms might become even more dangerous to the regime than private farming. In the old days the peasantry was scattered and slow to move; it lacked the capacity for political organization. Since the collectivization, the peasants were organized into compact bodies which might support the soviets but might also turn against them more effectively than the individual farmers could. To secure the party's close control over them, the rural Political Departments were established." (56)

Stalin would have wanted to make the peasants into wage-labourers, no more and no less, directly dependent on the state and with their old communitarian organization definitely swept aside. They, and the old populist movement, had refused to submit to this since 1861. Stalin therefore could only resolve this difficulty by transforming more and more kolkhozians into usurous kulaks, but no longer regarding the peasantry, but the predominantly working class urban strata. (57)

However, the communitarian achievement has not yet completely disappeared even today, according to several authors. As we have already noted, this is what P. Pascal said and it is what B.H. Kerblay suggested in his article Changes in Soviet Agriculture:

"The recent debates bear witness to a communal and family peasant tradition which, in some cases, shows itself to be against the current of solutions conceived to modernize the agrarian structures." (58)

56. Deutscher op. cit. p. 335

57. Stalin always used his opponents' ideas in his various retreats. So certainly he appealed to the old pan-slavist and populist essence of the Russians so that his theory of socialism in one country would win. In fact constructing socialism all alone, without the aid of the West, required the extolling of Russia (as with pan-slavism) and the affirmation that Russia could have its particular road (populism).

58. Cited in Problemes Economiques n. 1162, 1970

The historian E.H. Carr also gives seemingly contradictory information. In fact he wrote that the redistribution of the land began with the October revolution and affected the whole of the Soviet Republic in 1920. He gives statistics of tenure size showing the

Let us immediately foresee a possible misconception. We absolutely do not wish to say that the CMP was not and is not able to root itself in Russia. The question is more complex. We want to show that the CMP cannot develop in certain areas at certain stages of history. Thus in Germany, capitalism in its primordial, mercantile, commercial form (free trade and thus the liberal phase) met very great obstacles. It seemed that the Germans' 'characteristics' and the country's nature were completely proof to capitalism's principles. Marx himself spoke ironically of German patriarchalism and the country life of the German philistine etc.. However, when capital had achieved a certain dimension, in the form of fixed capital, and so science and organization were needed, the German 'character' became compatible with that of capital. We know when, at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one, rationalism progressed in this country and anticipated in the 20's the whole future movement of capital which was to bloom in the US after the Second World War.

Plekhanov used the German example a lot against the populists. He quoted all the authors who had stated before that the CMP could not develop in Germany in order to contrast them with the German reality of his time and, so doing, said to the populists that in Russia too nothing stood against the rise of the CMP.

It is right here that Plekhanov's analysis is totally insufficient. Certainly the CMP could develop in Russia from the moment

tenures up to 4 desyatins rose from 58% in 1917 to 72.1% in 1919 and 86% in 1920, which would indicate a fragmentation of the French type (cf. The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. 2 (Harmondsworth, 1966) p. 171). However, Carr tells us that on the contrary "The system of communal holdings with periodical redistribution was not affected by the reform..." (ibid. p. 53). (Here it is a question of the socialization of the land, a law promulgated under the influence of the Left S.R.s).

"The mir, with its periodical redistribution of land among its members and the individual peasant holding, continued to exist side by side without official discrimination between them." (ibid. p. 287).

Carr noted that there was great opposition within the mir to the departure of any of its members. He also notes that the basic law on the use of land of May 1922 recognized the existence of the art-el, commune and mir as much as the isolated possession in the otrub and khutor forms (ibid. p. 288).

One also finds many facts on this in Socialism in One Country Vol. 1 (Harmondsworth, 1970) pp. 205-352.

Panait Istrati made this remark which says a lot on the agrarian imbroglio:

"Even to the Russian town dwellers the country remains a complete mystery: entirely unexpected developments are suddenly revealed which surprise even the most vigilant observers; and these require investigation from time to time." Russia Unveiled (London, 1931) p. 120.

that it was constituted in the West in a material community able to replace the Tsarist state (in China it will replace the superior or englobing unity). This is what happened. Simultaneously that aided the installation of real domination in the most developed areas. Stalinism and Nazism cannot be assimilated, but there was a convergence. Nazi totalitarianism could be fleeting and transitory because the real despotism of capital operates now while it still has to arise in Russia. Therefore one can ask oneself if capital does not have to complete its domination in order to be able afterwards to impose itself on the USSR. Does it not have to attain the production not merely of another type pf person, but another species, thus realizing the bad kind of magic utopia as in Zamiatin's *We*?

Certain thinkers, as Marcuse showed, seek to intervene in hereditary phenomena in order to manipulate the genetic heritage. This would be the overthrow of human biology making man totally adaptable to capital (capital's old dream, cf. Galbraith!). The progress achieved in the US and elsewhere along with that achieved by the adepts of human manipulation in the USSR (where there has been the development from labour concentration camps to psychiatric concentration camps) permits the production of humans who no longer have earthly needs. Dependence on agriculture would therefore be eliminated. Anticipating the production of madness is a means to domesticate men. Capital in the West, by its very life course; the subjugation of men, engenders it. There is a need for enterprises specializing in madness in the USSR, due to its backwardness... However, the convergence is clear all the same. Delinquency and madness are basic contemporary characteristics of capitalism.

This stated, one can see that the 1906 debate at the Stockholm Conference on land nationalization and the danger implied by it of restoration, showed a lack of knowledge of capital's creation of the material community and the abandonment of any perspective of using the communitarian agrarian structures during the transition to communism.

"...Plekhanov defended Maslov, and tried to persuade the Congress that Lenin's proposal for nationalization smacked of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Narodnaya Volya." (59)

"Insofar as (or if) the land was nationalized in Muscovy, the economic basis for this nationalization was the Asiatic mode of production. But it is the capitalist mode of production that became established in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century, and is absolutely predominant in the twentieth century." (60)

But there was never the AMP and it is really to go far beyond the facts to state that the CMP had become dominant. Why then, as we remarked, a revolution to realize only the workers' and peasants' dictatorship? Why was the revolution fundamentally bourgeois ac-

59. 'Report of the Unity Congress of the RSDLP, a letter to the St. Petersburg Workers' (May 1906) in Collected Works Vol. 10, p. 328.

60. *ibid.* p. 332.

cording to Lenin himself?

Why did Lenin want nationalization? To forge ahead, to allow the development of the most evolved capitalist forms. On these premises one can but agree with him. But, so as to have a solid demonstration, he had to refute Plekhanov's presuppositions to his own arguments. Here Plekhanov rediscovered elements of his old populist theory, for example, on the state's importance.

""The situation in our country was such that the land, together with its cultivators, was held in servitude by the state, and on the basis of that servitude Russian despotism developed. To overthrow despotism, it is necessary to do away with the economic basis. Therefore, I am opposed to nationalization at present.""⁶¹ (61)

Another social-democrat made the following remark:

""If the revolution...were to lead to an attempt to nationalize the peasants' allotments, or to nationalize the lands confiscated from the landlords, as Comrade Lenin suggests, such a measure would lead to a counter-revolutionary movement, not only in the borderlands, but also in the central part of the country. We would have not one Vendée, but a general revolt of the peasantry against attempts by the state to interfere with the peasants' own (John's italics) allotments, against all attempts to nationalize the latter.""⁶² (62)

The Mensheviks adopted an artificial solution and so as to prove its effectiveness against autocracy, they quoted the resistance of the autonomist movement, the Armenians, Cossacks etc.. Now there was still a strong persistence of the agrarian community at the start of the twentieth century, above all in this last case. The real solution was that of Marx and the populists: give the land to the communities and transform the state which would become their ally. Thenceforth the state could no longer stand over the commune like a despot, but as a liaison between town and country (e.g. for delivering agricultural machinery), and as a defender against the kulaks so as to reabsorb them into the communities and not to destroy them. Thus there would be the realization of the state-commune.

Such a measure would not mean granting land to a single class of producers, because, as Marx said in The Nationalization of Land, that would not let us advance towards communism at all.

Landed property can only belong to the species. It would be a matter of revitalizing the communities so as to include technical progress and avoid the development of capital. That would have meant, in short, the application of the fundamental point of the then communist programme: the abolition of the town/country separation-opposition. Now capital accomplished that in its own way and to its own profit. The man-nature relationship is posed differently.

In the absence of this perspective, Lenin could only give the following guarantee against restoration in Russia:

"We are not in a position to call forth at our own will a social-

ist revolution in the West, which is the only absolute guarantee against restoration in Russia." (63)

He was right, but he displaced the problem. He could not see the danger of restoration, not as the return to another mode of production (the restoration in France did not re-establish feudalism, the monarchy was a bourgeois monarchy which had to stand at the head of society itself becoming more bourgeois, it could only hold back the movement), but as the reaffirmation of a previous form of political domination which would have had to have been suppressed. One would have needed to have understood the development of capital into the material community as had achieved in the West on the basis of the socialization of production and men. This could not happen in Russia because capital was not developed enough to domesticate men, to impose capital's life on them, forcing them into quantitative time, capital's time. Thus here there would be a real despotic authority ruling all aspects of life, hence the restoration of despotism. Therefore there is a great deal of truth in naming Stalin the Red Tsar. This despotism could not be an obscurantist one, but an enlightening one, and here again we find the importance of marxism. State intervention implies a certain will, a certain consciousness. Historical materialism suits the granting of this, thus explaining the fundamental mechanisms of the mode of production with the different representations for the various classes or elements intervening in the process. Since the state had to develop the CMP, with the perspective of reducing the length of capital's existence, that meant that the social body as a whole was unable to engender or supersede it. Thus it was not society that would engender its own adequate representation and consciousness during its movement. It had to be given the consciousness of something that it had to do. This duty was even more constraining as there was an abyss between the mentality of the mujik and what capital needed to develop. It was not without reason that Lenin said that one had to learn to work!

Finally, the state was reinforced (as was the case after every revolution in France), and it was after the defeat of the revolution in the West that the Menshevik forecast was realized. Bureaucracy was only secondary. Bureaucrats were charged with the execution of the state's decisions. They could not form an autonomous class (as much under Tsarism as during the soviet period). They were not the ones who breathed life into the CMP, instead they lived at its expense, just as all capitalists become functionaries of capital (cf. Marx on the depersonalization of the capitalist). But even in Russia, the dominant people, as Bordiga said, were not the bureaucrats, but speculators, businessmen, gangs etc., proliferating on the basis of the material community under construction (in the industrial arena). Only this takes on a more statist attitude in the USSR and, as Bordiga said, they sucked the state-penis. This analysis is in line with Marx's when he spoke of "capitalist interlopers empowered at the expense of the same state".

Capital without a capitalist class: that could be realized by the CMP as Ricardo, Marx and Bordiga stated (64). This was only possible in the West when capital had constituted a material community and so when it had overthrown the old statist presuppositions. A papering over of the capitalist class took place through the intermediary of the restoration of despotism in the USSR (in the Asian area the tendency is identical), so that capital does not dominate according to its being. But the ever increasing intervention of the world capitalist community, especially through the intermediary of the US, tended to produce a more rigorous equivalent between capital and the power of domination over society.

A common preoccupation of the Tsar, populists and Bolsheviks was the use of capital's productive forces without having to undergo the existence of a capitalist class. For the Tsars it was a question of using these forces to perfect their domination of the Russian people and to be able to fight other states. For the populists it was necessary to leap over the CMP, for the Bolsheviks to shorten its duration. But the marxists had to act as visionaries, as Bordiga said, and accomplish a romantic task, inevitably they also would have to accomplish the task of the counter-revolution regarding the proletariat when they had to run capital alone after the freezing of the revolution in the West. This gave rise to the theory that the masses were unable to understand their own interests. Only the party and state had science and consciousness of what they needed. Repression was useful, therefore, humane because it was for their own good that men were massacred. The state was really the benefactor! The populists too understood the tasks to be accomplished:

"In other words, we have to do what has already long been done everywhere else in Europe, not by the Socialist parties, but by the bourgeoisie." (65)

They also conceived of the necessity of a revolutionary state, but for them the obshchina remained the guarantee of a fully revolutionary development of the social transformation.

Finally, an inverse proof the terrible trap of the power of the

64. The bourgeoisie was not the motivating-mobilizing class in any bourgeois revolution after 1871 since it was too feeble and as it was destroyed by the revolution itself (as in Russia). The bourgeoisie strata were generally linked to the world capitalist class. Now, at least at first, revolutions attacked the CMP. Besides, if the CMP succeeded in imposing itself on new zones, that was no longer due to the capitalists. Consequently it is wrong to speak of a bourgeois revolution concerning China and all the anti-colonial revolutions. One must speak of a capitalist revolution because the mode of production tending to arise, by the will of those directing the revolution or not, is the CMP. In the case of the Russian revolution, it is best to call it a double revolution, capitalist and proletarian.

65. Kibalchich, quoted by Venturi op. cit. p. 679.

state: the flowering of intellectual and artistic activity during the collapse of tsarism (in a few years Russia reached the front) and also a blooming of human relations, a liberated sexuality, as Vera Schmidt's work shows. But on the other hand there was a renewal of despotism, the praise for the monogamous family, a rigid and stupid morality, the cult of work, and soviet realism. This realism had a despotic requirement. Representation had to be the double of reality. There was no escape: imagination was enchainied.

A final consequence of this periodization into real and formal domination has to be taken up and analysed. We have recalled one of the components of Marx's and Engels' position on Russia: that of the agrarian commune. There remains the attitude to tsarism. As Bordiga showed at length, Marx thought of only one thing: the destruction of tsarism (the famous Russophobia attributed to Marx), as it was an obstacle first to the bourgeois revolution, then to the communist revolution. One had to prevent tsarism from impeding or destroying the rise of the CMP in Germany, because a strong proletariat existed there and so socialism was close. Marx's and especially Engels' analysis proved inconsistent at a given moment. The anti-Russian position was right when the CMP was weak in Germany (it could only really develop on the basis of territorial expansion, the national question being this country's central one) and while no revolutionary movement had developed inside Russia. But when Marx stated that the Russian revolution was to be the prelude to the European revolution, when he considered the revolution in Russia to be active, when bourgeois domination reigned in western Europe; the old strategy with the consequent tactic was no longer correct. Besides, when formal domination over society was realized in Germany, with aspects of real domination, clearly tsarism could no longer threaten the rise of German capitalism. Tsarism had to change to win. We believe that the CMP had clearly shown its superiority after 1871.

The moment of discontinuity occurring at the end of the last century was perceived, but not understood. It was not recognized as such. It was the moment when capital had just integrated the proletariat, so ensuring its real domination over the immediate production process, and tended to realize it on a global scale of the production process and over the whole of society. It was only to attain this after two world wars and the various movements such as fascism, nazism, the New Deal, and with the help of franquism, peronism etc., with their different historical characteristics. This moment of discontinuity implied the end of the possibility of using democracy, applying the direct tactic, because there no longer was the possibility of competition for seizing power to direct the productive forces since capital had definitely triumphed. Also this movement was already effective in 1871 in West Europe and the USA, as Marx himself wrote:

"The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be mere humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as the class struggle bursts out into civil war. Class

"rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the national governments are one as against the proletariat!"
(66)

Tsarism could no longer hinder the evolution of the CMP in Germany in this context because it had become its subject. A conflict with Germany would require the industrialization of Russia allowing the modernization of the army. This would provoke social contradictions in the country, making it more vulnerable.

The other aspect of the movement of the discontinuity was the power of the Russian revolutionary movement which strengthened from 1861 on; the populists being its most remarkable exponents. They were to be overtaken by the marxists at the start of the twentieth century. The fundamental themes of their activity were, after all, the same apart from the obshchina.

It was the CMP that became the most dangerous enemy of the proletarian revolution. The West European ruling class, as Engels noted, would have an interest intervening in Russia to re-establish the Tsar's power and, as was the case in February 1917, to attempt to run the capitalist revolution from above, keeping the proletariat out of power and by smothering the proletarian revolution in the West.

It was no longer possible to examine Russia through the eyes of the young Marx polemicizing in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung or in the New York Tribune. Engels sensed this correctly when he opposed for a while the formation of the Second International, saying that one had to await the ripening of events in Russia. Later, in the 1905 revolution Rosa Luxemburg knew how to perceive and conceive of Russia as the revolutionary centre, and even Kautsky wrote in 1902, as Lenin recalled, that:

"'In 1848 the Slavs were the black frost which blighted the flowers of the peoples' spring. Perhaps they are now destined to be the storm that will break the ice of reaction and will irresistably bring a new and happy spring for the nations.'

(Karl Kautsky The Slavs and the Revolution, 1902)" (67)

One could not better express the change underway. However, most of these statements were futureless (Kautsky), or could not be imposed (Luxemburg). The German revolutionaries' hesitations on the Russian question and finally their return to a simple anti-Slavism, freezing them very precisely, i.e. definitely, was expressed by Engels. He wrote to Bebel on October 24th. 1891:

"If, however, the French bourgeoisie begin such a war nevertheless, and for this purpose place themselves in the service of the Russian Tsar, who is the enemy of the bourgeoisie of the whole of western Europe, this will be the renunciation of France's revolutionary mission. We German socialists, on the other hand, who if peace is preserved will come to power in

66. Marx The Civil War in France: Address of the General Council in The First International and After (Harmondsworth, 1974) pp. 231-2.

67. Lenin Collected Works Vol. 30 (Moscow, 1965) p. 527.

"ten years, have the duty of maintaining the position won by us in the van of the workers' movement, not only against the internal but also against the external foe. If Russia is victorious we shall be crushed. Therefore if Russia begins war - go for her! go for the Russians and their allies, whoever they may be. (...) We have not yet forgotten the glorious example of the French in 1793 and, if we are driven to it, it may come about that we celebrate the centenary of 1793 by showing that the German workers of 1893 are not unworthy of the Sans-culottes of those days..." (68)

It is surprising enough that Engels could talk of France's revolutionary mission after the Commune; all the more so since he had written in his polemic with Tkachev about Russia that there were no longer chosen peoples. Also a Russian victory over the Germans would not necessarily mean the defeat of the CMP because, in that case, despite a military defeat, a more developed form could often arise. Horace once said that Greece conquered the victors (the Romans)! Here Engels was completely deluded by democracy. He thought that the workers would assume power through elections. The war forestalled this glorious occasion. This was clearly what he thought as one finds it again in an article published in 1892 entitled Socialism in Germany which invoked the defence of the German nation and the wartime necessity of readopting the words of the Marseillaise from the foreign cohorts and stated:

"Peace will assure the victory of the German social democratic party in about ten years." (69)

Finally, to understand this aberrant position, one has to allow for the fact that Engels in 1891 thought that the workers' movement had to complete the German revolution.

"The revolution from above of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed but supplemented and improved by a movement from below." (70) Lenin had perfectly understood the discontinuity on this point and was not to fall at all into the trap of national war, of progressive war (for the West then). This discontinuity was even more remarkable in that he had to oppose the directives of master Engels who even wrote (in another letter of 13.10.1891.) of proposing conditional support for the government in wartime!

Thus capital began to reach its geographical limits at the turn of the century and had to pass on to a phase of intensive development (which some realized later in conceiving of an internal colonization) and so doing it confronted the whole huge area where men had retained their communitarian structures. That forced revolutionaries to consider the world revolution not in classist terms alone, and the capitalist phase as not necessarily obligatory for the accession to communism.

The difficulty in the revolutionary struggle is precisely to

68. Marx Engels Correspondence 1846-1895 (London, 1934) pp. 491-2.

69. Marx Engels Werke Band 22, p. 256.

70. A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic programme of 1891 in Marx Engels Selected Works Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1970) p. 436.

perceive the discontinuities and so be able to undertake a new theoretical activity in order to envisage the revolutionary phenomenon right from the start of the discontinuity which will emerge years later with characteristics determined exactly by the discontinuity which one was able to recognize. It is just in moments of struggle that one should impose the most radical solution because it is always possible to make the greatest discontinuity. That is why the revolutionary years are rich in events and ideas, but after there is just a dreary repetition of the past, right up to the new discontinuity.

This is more difficult as the task of the ruling class is to veil the discontinuities and make believe that all is as before, that one must persist in the continuity dominated by this class. The French socialists believed that they had to continue the French revolution and did not see the discontinuity that their own movement implied. The marxists at the end of the last century only assured the continuity of the process of capital by believing that they worked for the formation of another society, since they did not question the principle of the growth of the productive forces.

Capital's rise, as Marx said, unbolted the door barring the development of the productive forces by liberating men from the old social presuppositions and technical development, the two being indissolubly linked. Capital ended nature idolatory, the tendency to consider what exists as an existential taboo, i.e. as something immutable. Nevertheless man no longer perceived himself under the sign of immutability, as an unchangeable element of nature, a base from which man could recognize himself as an autonomous creator:

"Compared with this standpoint, the commercial, or manufacture system took a great step forward by locating the source of wealth not in the object but in a subjective activity - in commercial and manufacturing activity..." (71)

This found its philosophical recognition in Kant's philosophy which questioned the old mode of thought:

"Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects..." but "...objects must conform to our knowledge." (72)

The change of method consists in centering everything on the subject.

The real break; the discontinuity of man with nature (cf. Abbot Breuil who said that peasant civilization was extinguished in our epoch, that the cycle originating in the neolithic period ended) came with the CMP. So it is a point of departure for a development which goal could be man himself in an infinite process (the true and the non-indefinite). It is this aspect that Marx praised in the Grundrisse above all. Put another way, man can reject all the dogmas, all the social and natural limits, from the moment

71. Grundrisse (English edition) pp. 103-4. 72. 'Preface' to the Second Edition of Critique of Pure Reason (London, 1970).

When he is totally liberated from his old community, or its modified forms. But if the solution was found, it would still be necessary to master the new forces that were autonomizing themselves. The bourgeoisie, the capitalists, gave themselves over entirely to this development (73) and fully accepted the exteriorization of man and his recombination in the form of machines (because it was not just any man that underwent this, but the proletarian) accepting the formation of new dogmas: of progress, the development of the productive forces, growth, worship of the new divinity of science.

Moreover, from the time when the rise of the productive forces became an acquired fact in a given place for a determined part of humanity, the other men remaining in their communitarian forms could use it (especially if they were able to allow the emancipation of the individuality, as was the case with the Slav commune) and thus avoid the bloody course of western society. This was the basic preoccupation of Russian populism which afforded a grandiose character to the debates which the diverse populist currents had among themselves, and with the marxists and anarchists.

The development of the productive forces, of the base, of the point of departure for the affirmation of the human community emancipated from natural and social limits, transformed itself into a conquering power at the end of the last century, which was to reduce man to a more degrading position than any endured during prior modes of production: the moment of capital's autonomization. That is, after subjugating the negating class, the proletariat, it dominated the ruling class itself which ruled only by mediation. Henceforth the liberating potentialities disappeared and only the oppressive reality remained. But the whole social body continued to perceive in the old way, this being a cause of the sacred alliance of 1914.

Once again it is clear that it is not merely a matter of understanding that there is a discontinuity, of perceiving new aspects that appear strange, but that one must reorder all theoretical activity. The difficulty of such an action can be seen in Marx himself. He had all the elements for understanding the real domination of capital over society, grasping the mode of its accomplishment, the theoretical facts for understanding the social forces, in their specificity, apart from capital, and the non-obligation of going through the CMP. But the works where one finds that were not published in his lifetime. Where the hesitations are clearer it is in his reply to Zasulich, which is very short, while

73. The bourgeoisie believed that it could dominate technique when it engendered capital by its development, the automated despot Marx spoke about. They believed that they could dominate the movement of exchange value and yet it was due to the bourgeois revolution that the obstacles opposing themselves to capital's autonomization were lifted and value could become capital. The bourgeoisie produced a false consciousness of its own historical movement and that of capital. Socialists were content mainly to explain and oppose it to a true conecionese: marxism.

the drafts are long and, above all, contain real elements of the reply that went beyond the one actually sent.

It is not a question of recomposing a Marx a posteriori for modern use, but of coming to grips with him in all his complexity, and continuing to struggle, of course. Organizing something coherent for our needs and present events from him is to desire to rob his life and ridicule his death. The lot of the revolution in Russia was linked to that in West Europe and vice versa from 1848. The theoretical and practical retreat at the end of the last century, the abandonment of the perspective of the leap over the CMP, had the corollary in the genesis of marxism: theory of growth, an absolute reinforcement of Europocentrism with a unilinear conception of the development of human societies etc.. It is known when the Second International (apart from Luxemburg and Lenin) no longer preoccupied itself with national and colonial questions. Bernstein justified colonialism in the name of capital's civilizing role. The Baku Congress of 1920 proclaimed war on imperialism and the West impelled by the Russian revolution and the insurrectionary movements in Asia. Lenin took up the perspective of the leap over the CMP at the Second Congress of the Communist International

"The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal - in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organizations in the colonies and backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organization of peasants' soviets and strive to adapt them to pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage." (74)

However, given that there was no serious analysis of the particular characteristics of social forms where the revolution broke out and grew has been made, the easy solution consists in transferring the Russia schema (itself a product of a reductionist work to all struggles underway. This led to the invention of feudalism to justify the alliance with the so-called national bourgeoisie, for example. This resulted in the massacre of the Cantonese and Shanghai workers. Massacres of proletarians followed the same manœuvres in Iraq (1958), Indonesia (1965), and Sudan (1971), to

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cite only the most recent examples.

The assertion of the particularities of a geo-social area was long considered to be the origin of reformism by currents claiming to be marxist. They preferred mumbling a series of modes of production correct for all humanity. From 1958, due to the anti-colonial revolutions, a study of Formations preceding capitalist production allowed for a re-examination of the entire question as one can see in Bordiga's text Class and National Struggles in the World of non-White Peoples, vital historical field for the revolutionary marxist critique where what is basic is the rejection of any idea of the superiority of European civilization. He stated, after Marx, that the societies where man was the goal of production were superior to our own. Also, in 1960 appeared a duplicated pamphlet in Italian called The Succession of Forms of Production in Marxist Theory, written mainly by Roger Dangeville, commenting on the Forms preceding capitalist production, summarizing their different characteristics in detail in a table. (75)

Those works evoked a very feeble echo. We cannot dally here on the reasons for this check because we must indicate what finally results from the abandonment of Marx's and the populists' theoretical behaviour regarding the CMP. We have lost, the proletariat as a historical class and now humanity have lost the possibility of leaping over the CMP in certain areas of the world, and we have been most incapable of conceiving of it, infested as we were by the idea that progress is for all people the development of the productive forces, i.e. in the end, capital, which was the affirmation inside the proletariat of the interiorization of capital's victory. Thus it is natural that the peoples whom we have forced to submit by our agreement with the deadly enemy, the infamous path of the passage to the CMP, should accuse us (the violent critiques of Marx's ethnocentrism have been made by various ethnologists originating among these people). We must all find through this, and on the basis of communism (theory and movement), the path to our common liberation.

III

Every revolution has a triple character depending on how long ago it occurred. If one envisages the revolution in a vast historical cycle, it appears like a natural phenomenon which developed spontaneously and with irrepressible violence. That is how the Russian

75. This pamphlet was published in French as Succession des Formes de Production et de Societe dans la Theorie Marxiste (Le Fil du Temps n. 9, Jul. 1972). This edition contains some additions, particularly 'Les Deux Phases du Developpement Social de la production capitaliste' which show that Dangeville did not understand Marx's periodization, as we have already shown in 'Le VI^e Chapitre Inedit du Capital et l'oeuvre economique de Marx' (Invariance n. 2, Serie I, 1968)

revolution appears when one studies it from the 1825 Decembrists (many of Pestel's positions were re-adopted by the populists and he himself adopted some of Radishchev's, which were at least thirty years earlier) to the October revolution. However, if one examines the revolution at the moment of its paroxysm, culminating in February to October 1917, it appears that it only happened because there were people that could be called 'extraordinary' and that the revolution could only happen because of their action. Some made Lenin into a messiah, and Zinoviev said that he was the type of man who appeared only once in 500 years. Finally, when one studies the revolution in retrospect, in what it realized, and one compares it with the pre-revolutionary period, often some doubt its necessity. All that happened was that the members of the ruling class tended to make it, so the conviction as to its uselessness is reinforced. Instead one must know how to reform in time. It is true that the revolution solved no problems that it itself was to create, but it resolved those that the previous mode of production had given rise to and could not solve.

We have analysed the first characteristic, there remain the other two, which are intimately linked and are determined by the first. Here it is not a matter of making a justification, but of giving as realistic an exposition as possible of what had inevitably to arise from the moment that the discontinuity that we have mentioned had not been integrated into the theory. We shall only provide statements because it is impossible to prove adequately their truth in the bounds of this introduction.

Whatever some critics of bolshevism may say, the Bolsheviks did not stage a coup d'etat in October 1917, in the sense that it was a movement to force the situation and to assume a different course to the one already started. Their seizure of power was an absolutely vital moment of the revolutionary movement beginning in February. It allowed the realization of what was already underway, but which would have been stopped if the old state (an obstacle to the free development of the revolutionary forces) had not also been destroyed. Not even a capitalist revolution would have been able to develop without this act, and Russia would have evolved like India did.

On the other hand, the Bolsheviks could not make "the bourgeois revolution in the proletarian manner", despite what Bordiga said. The Brest-Litovsk peace was not, as Lenin hoped:

"...peace in the interests of the working people, and not in the interests of the capitalists." (1)

In March 1917 he had written:

"There is only one way to prevent the restoration of the police, and that is to create a people's militia and to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the entire people)." (2)

But the police was re-established and Lenin proclaimed it to be necessary. As for the Red Army, it was constituted just like the

1. The Virtual Armistice in Collected Works Vol. 24, p. 377.
2. The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution ibid. p. 70.

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army of the French revolution, as an amalgam, separated from the people.

Workers' control had been one of the central points of the revolutionary programme before October, but it was rapidly replaced by economic management, the need for competition, and the Taylor system (which Lenin had previously criticized violently). Thus there is a mass of facts attesting to the overgrowth of the revolution, hoped for by Lenin from 1905, and on which the majority of revolutionaries had counted, being exhausted in a year due to the delay in international aid. So a purely capitalist content imposed itself. The Bolsheviks also rapidly lost the ability to understand all the possible renewals of this overgrowth, because they were caught up in the state. They no longer had the receptivity to allow them to avoid losing all touch with the proletariat and peasantry.

There was some radicalization in 1919 with the revolutionary movements in the West, allowing the creation of the Third International, but the retreat reopened the path to economic integration. The soviet state progressively became a state stronger than society, but prey to world capital. The Bolsheviks wished to maintain the state as it had been built. They would only modify it as they were so constrained and forced. Above all, they would concede it to the proletariat only after the latter's reformation, economic reorganization, and the restarting of industry. This was, as Venturi showed, somewhat similar to the position of some members of Narodnaya Volya:

"The revolutionary party would not hand over power to the representatives of the people until the revolution had been achieved. Until that time they would keep it firmly in their own hands and resist anyone who tried to snatch it from them." (3)

Put another way, the Russian proletariat had not succeeded in constituting itself as the ruling class in the way Marx had indicated in the Communist Manifesto and Critique of the Gotha Programme. It had thus founder just like the western proletariat in 1848 and 1871. The Kronstadt Commune and its repression, the great strike in Petrograd, are the most convincing expressions of this. Parallel to this retreat was the fact that Lenin spoke more of building socialism in Russia after 1921. The constitution as a ruling class was realized later in a mystified form (just as in the West) when the last opposition movements were eliminated.

Leading the "bourgeois revolution", even "in the proletarian manner" cannot avoid the retention of the conception of the party, the latter being conceived of institutionally: one must organize the working class which finally organizes the peasantry, thus Russian society. The society sank ever deeper into chaos following the dissolution of the obshchina which made a solidly structured party necessary: it was the sole element with an absolute will, inflexibility and the ability to be the intermediary between the state and the peasants.

Lenin was circumspect over the soviets. (In one way he agreed with the Mensheviks: the appearance of the soviets was due to the absence

of the party and trade unions.) He praised them: they were "the embryo of a new revolutionary power", and he mistrusted them because he feared spontaneist and anarcho-syndicalist influences. The soviets were a sort of adaptation of an organ of the obshchina called the skhod. So in finally adopting them in 1917 and to such an extent that they were placed in the front rank in State and Revolution, Lenin again adopted populist elements because the revolution in Russia could not avoid having a populist character. But he could not stop identifying the soviets with a western phenomenon. He declared that they realized proletarian democracy while they were beyond democracy from the start just because of their attempt to recompose the community, even beyond the geo-social-historic basis of the countryside. The formation of soviets was the affirmation of the constitution of the proletarian class as class. But very soon after there was a break between them and the Communist Party. The soviets were not powerful enough to encompass it, and the party did not succeed in achieving a supersession on their basis (a spontaneous movement against Tsarism and world capital). The impossibility of the union between them expressed the blocking of the Russian revolution as a socialist revolution.

The explosion of the soviets as the way of life of the Russian proletariat in its movement for the destruction of capital allows the explanation of the following difference: in pre-1914 Germany the SPD and the trade unions it ran grouped all the workers, while in Russia a similar party did not exist on the eve of the revolution. The party in Germany was the expression of the proletarian movement. It tended to be a society, as some have remarked. We would say moreover that it tended to form a new community which also maintained capital's presuppositions, hence its failure. Its project was realized without the illusory veil by the Nazi Party when it included the proletariat as producer in the community of capital. Rosa Luxemburg clearly understood this and waited right to the end before making the break, i.e. when the break had already been made by the proletariat. The break did not pose such a problem for the Russians because the community that the workers tended to create occurred in forms other than the party: in the soviets. The party phenomenon as the expression of the global class opposition could not occur in Russia because of the non-class dimension to the revolution. We have insisted at length on the popular-populist aspect of the 1905 revolution (that is why the historians of the Russian revolution prefer to deal with it at rapidly as possible) which reappeared in February and even October 1917. The soviets thus had to be reconquered, while in Germany the councils immediately fell under SPD influence and the revolutionary proletariat had to form Unionen.

In both cases, Russia and Germany, the wish to use the other as a model was partly irrelevant. Originally Lenin and the Bolsheviks (but also the Mensheviks to some extent) dreamt of creating a party like the SPD. Later the German communists aimed at bolshevization of their own party.

The various parties all acted as if marginal to the action, despite all their links with the masses: marginal to the movement of the

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proletariat and peasantry. The hiatus could have been abolished in 1917. It is perhaps because of this discord between the party and the masses that some have said that the October revolution was premature. We think that it was an attempt at unification, more exactly of a party-masses coalescence with the question of the struggle between the parties as bearers of different historical perspectives always in suspense, and always both present and absent was the abandonment of the perspective of the leap over the CMP, the determining factor in the development of the revolution. The socialist over-growth could only be realized on the basis of this unification.

One of the most controversial measures was the proclamation of the right of nations to self-determination: certainly a bourgeois measure, but needed to disorganize the Tsar's empire, so enfeebling the central power. That is why one already finds it in the programme of the worker members of the Narodnaya Volya party:

"(3) Peoples who have been annexed to the Russian state by violence will be free either to abandon the Pan-Russian federation or to remain within it." (4)

And this had been stated by other populist currents beforehand. One must not, though, omit the fact that Lenin did not oppose the members of the proletarian parties of the countries under Russian domination when they declared that, on the contrary, one must remain in the Russian zone. But the weakness lay in not having understood the important mutation in relation to the nineteenth century. Then a reconstructed Poland played a revolutionary role. A century later, its re-establishment could only be the creation of the counter-revolution. Rosa Luxemburg had seen this intuitively (5).

4. *ibid.* p. 702

5. Rosa Luxemburg's positions are usually deformed, a process aided by the non-appearance of her collected works. Her contribution to the Polish question is remarkable and cannot be dealt with here. A serious analysis of her position can only begin with her thesis Die industrielle Entwicklung Polens (The Industrial Development of Poland) (Leipzig, 1898) where she demonstrated the fundamental role of Polish capital in Russian industry and thus the formation of the Russian-Polish interdependence. The 1917 revolution certainly destroyed this. It would be interesting to study the many consequences of this for the later development of the USSR and Poland too, as well as the latter's present subjugation by soviet despotism.

Marx, and especially Engels, were a bit absurd on Poland. Engels wrote to Marx (23.5.1851.) "...the more I think over the business, the clearer it becomes to me that the Poles as a nation are done for and can only be made use of as an instrument until Russia herself is swept into the agrarian revolution. From that moment onwards Poland will have absolutely no more reason for existence." (Marx Engels Correspondence 1846-95 (London, 1934) p. 37). Before he had remarked "Beside Hungary, Germany has only one possible ally, Russia, on condition that there is a peasant revolution in that country." (Werke Vol. 27, p. 266). But after 1869-70 a strong revolutionary movement developed in Russia and, moreover, Poland was crushed in

It is insufficient to attribute the checking of the revolution in the countries that separated themselves from Russia to the Bolsheviks' position. It was the product of the weakness of the whole international movement. The revolution in the countries on the southern periphery (i.e. Turkey, Iran and India), which had also been affected by the revolutionary wave, was easily blocked by world capitalism and clearly the USSR used them from the very start to diminish the pressure exercised on herself, so contributing to the congealing of their development.

However, just like those countries, Central Europe too constituted an axis where revolution and counter-revolution again met and the two axes were like the fault lines of contemporary capitalist society. It is no accident that among the most repressive states in the world are to be found there. The counter-revolution thus had to block the development by provoking a balkanization of Central Europe (where it was only restructured) as in other countries of the Middle East, and especially with the division of India into India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ceylon and the small Himalayan states. Now however, the revolution develops from above and the spectre of popular revolution has not been totally exorcized. Also the 1911 movement in Ceylon showed a communist dimension.

The Bolsheviks did not succeed in reimposing communist theory. Bordiga stated the opposite and always called this theory marxism. This is, for us, only the ideologization of the theory. It is true that Bordiga's proposition would be correct, taken literally, but we maintain our statement, given what we have said. Actually the Bolsheviks 'restored' what they needed for their immediate struggle, i.e. things on the state, revolution, party, development of the CMP, the development of human societies etc..

The weakness of the Bolshevik Party appears in this definition of communism by Lenin:

"What is a communist? Communist is a Latin word. Communis is Latin for 'common'. Communist society is a society where all things - the land, the factories - are owned in common and the people work in common. That is communism." (6)

A restoration no longer imposes itself upon us (even if one removes everything reactionary from that word) because one has to do more. One has to supersede Marx's work and that of all those working with the communist revolution in view. It is the capitalist movement which imposes itself upon us. It has gone, as Marx foresaw, beyond its limits and so it is no longer a matter of, e.g. developing an activity to restructure the working class, to unite it, but of operating in the movement of the negation of classes. Thus it is not a question of wishing to impose the dialectic again, but of thinking of superseding it.

The analysis of what the Russian revolution realized and its diffusion in the world is more important than the study of the errors

5. cont. 1863. Hence Rosa Luxemburg's position had to emerge

6. The Tasks of the Youth Leagues in Collected Works Vol. 31, pp. 295-6

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and weaknesses of the Bolsheviks, even though these cannot be excluded from the lesson. Given the weight of the communitarian phenomenon, it is totally inadequate to compare the Russian revolution with the revolutions of 1789-84, 1848-9, or 1871, as Lenin did, following Engels. There are certainly common traits, but the dimension of the leap over the CMP was always missing as the perspective and possibility of these revolutions. This perspective and possibility supported the whole Russian revolutionary process.

The Russian revolution profited from the capitalist mode of production, just as the CMP profited from the USSR. This was already the case of Russia in the last century:

"Russian diplomacy has already survived, not only undamaged, but with direct profit, so many western European revolutions, that it was in a position to greet the outbreak of the February revolution of 1848 as an exceedingly favourable occasion." (?)

Russia had helped England to become the leading capitalist power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and by maintaining the European status quo, especially after 1848, it aided in the realization of the formal domination of capital. The USSR became partner to the US in the twentieth century and contributed to ensuring the latter's global supremacy. But that simultaneously facilitated the realization of the real domination of capital over society (8). Two great revolutions, in France and China, momentarily tended to question those evil-intentioned alliances. Each time the shock could be overcome and now one can say that China is integrated into the community of capital's domination, that its real domination is tending to graft itself onto Chinese society.

Both revolutions were defeated. The defeat was concretized in the destruction of the German proletariat, so feared by Marx. But it was not Tsarism, but the young soviet capitalism that did this, so greatly increasing the realization of the real domination of capital over society world-wide.

The end result was the rejuvenation of capital because, in the final analysis, it profited from humanity's youthful forces, i.e. the countries still not overcome by the development of exchange value. Capital's own movement has resolved the question Marx asked Engels in his letter of 1858. But the irruption of the masses which had barely issued from the community, or were separating from it, weighed so heavily on the development of humanity that one again finds the debate between populists and marxists over the resolution of the questions posed by the introduction of capital into such areas, while an attempt was made to avoid the western path. There was certainly a very rapid development and what emerged twenty

7. Engels The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism (1890) in The Russian Menace to Europe cit. p. 44.

8. Many authors, including Marx and Tocqueville, have written studies comparing the evolution of Russia and the USA. The populists saw some similarities in the rise of the two countries, the only ones where something new could be done, they thought. One of the most remarkable common elements was the phenomenon of the frontier.

years ago has largely been superseded by capital because capital itself has drawn the lessons of the development of the western "path". The Japanese did not destroy their old human relations, and so they could graft the capitalist mode of production onto feudal society which has not yet been fully dissolved. So there could be a limitation to the constitution of the proletariat as a class because the break with the old presuppositions was not made. Primitive accumulation by the western method was impossible in China because the expropriation of the peasants would create utter chaos due to the enormity of the population. Besides, capital used the communitarian phenomenon to hinder the autonomization of the working class. This is the case in South Africa where the black proletariat is readSORBED into the old community to which it returns after a few years in the town, the community being the zone of capital's reserve. Finally there are areas of climatic difficulty where capital has only been able to implant itself through the communitarian phenomenon. This is exemplified in Israel by the kibbutz, but it also occurs in Angola, or did in Zaire under Belgian rule. Generally capital, having reached the level of material community, no longer needs totally to dissolve the old social relations in order to dominate. Moreover, dissolving them would even remove the possibility for capital to implant itself because it needs humans, those able to survive, and the only living and operative behaviour is the communitarian one in some parts of the world.

Another statement one can make on Russia's rise, and which was generalized in nearly all the countries undergoing capitalist revolutions after 1917, is that liberalism and democracy cannot flourish there. There can be either communist forms or despotism. Some populists understood this perfectly. In these countries there can but be inflation of the state, assuming grotesque aspects in some African states.

Here again we can note the theoretical wandering of Lenin and the Bolsheviks: their defence of democracy and the wish to establish a proletarian democracy. The whole debate between them and the social-democrats (especially Kautsky and Bauer) was a huge quid pro quo. The latter called the Bolsheviks undemocratic; the Bolsheviks replied that they were realizing democracy, not pure democracy, but true democracy: democracy for the vast majority etc.. But this was impossible in Russia as this country could either go far beyond democracy, or engender despotism, given the historico-social character. This aided the social-democrats' positions given that the dictatorship of the proletariat was rapidly reduced to that of the party and so that of the state. The defence of democracy in the West could only be a defence of capital, but the Bolsheviks could not state that theoretically and practically as they were enlisted in the glorification of revolutionary parliamentarianism. Perhaps only Bordiga took a revolutionary position: total rejection of democracy (9), but his break was rapidly readSORBED due the position he took on the Russian revolution and the Communist International. The revolutionaries acted

under the level of historical potentialities. If "words overflowed the content" in 1848, as Marx said, after 1917 in the West, words masked the inability to seize the content.

In short one can say that the 1848-1917 period (one should also remember the other rejuvenations, such as the Chinese revolution, which took place during the period of renewal indicated above) was when the proletarian revolution in the period of capital's formal domination over society was mainly classist as the proletariat had to destroy the bourgeois state on taking power, constituting itself as the ruling class, but also because it had to generalize its own condition to allow the growth of the productive forces, a fundamental condition for proceeding to communism. One finds here what may be called Marx's revolutionary reformism and linked to it the characteristic that once power was won, one went on to reforms of the economic apparatus and to proclaim laws favouring the proletarian class, e.g. shortening the working day:

"The shortening of the working day is its (i.e. socialism's) basic prerequisite.." (10)

This conditioned the existence of post-capitalist phases before pure communism. Also the indirect tactic had to be applied, given that a certain development of the productive forces was necessary, and so too a sufficiently developed proletariat. One had to struggle against capital's enemies or to pressurize capital through the intermediary of the state to improve the proletariat's position, but also to force capital to develop (11). When Marx wrote inter alia a phenomenology of capital, he also wrote defending a theory of growth. Clearly he wanted to understand the development of capital and not only to describe the mode of its destruction (Marx's study is a necrology, as Bordiga said), but also to be able to proceed without exchange value developing and engendering capital, especially in countries where the CMP was little developed or was yet to start. Since the 1848 revolution had not destroyed the old society, one had to explain capitalist society in order to understand how the revolution would be able to launch a new attack on it. Also one had to smash the various utopias like Proudhon's which desired free credit!

The men who could appear when a new social form emerged or when a social form had to give over to another (the two moments did not always coincide) could be revolutionaries, while those having to live while the new mode of production had to exhaust its content were often easily absorbed. Marx and Engels saw the great break of 1848, but they too had to submit to the phase of capital's development, especially after 1871. Their revolutionary reformism emerged during this phase. It was not for nothing that Capital described the movement of the CMP and showed how the proletariat could fight it, "the serpent of their torments", and described above all how communism could implant itself on the basis of capital's formal domination over society. Clearly their position was difficult when they refused to retreat after the revolutionary movement was finished to avoid lett-

10. Capital Vol. III (Moscow, 1971) p. 820.

11. Capital Vol. I, Chapter 10, 'The Working Day'.

ing themselves be absorbed by the infamous honesty of bourgeois society. The use of politics and democracy contained the danger of an integration even more pernicious if it operated under the cover of a struggle. Marx, and especially Engels, were recuperated by democracy in fact. Thus marxism could be created and revisionism etc. flourish. So for us, living when the content is exhausted and who can have a really revolutionary and radical position (although this deserves no special mention), it is Marx's early works which are compatible with our revolutionary passion because they are already beyond capital and do not compromize with its intermediate development, suffered by generations of proletariene.

Put another way, the revolutionaries of the last century had to enter deeply into their own negation, not only in thought, but also in life, i.e. they had to work to reinforce capital while being in a position to think of their conclusion to this development in the negative. But, as Hegel said, one risks losing oneself (total alienation) in such an abandonment. This is also what happened to the entire workers' momement, as was very clearly theorized by Bernstein: the movement is all; the goal nothing. It could see humanity's development only through the infinite development (the bad, i.e. the indefinite) of the productive forces, really a development of capital as it was absorbed by capital which it should have negated. The dichotomy between minimum and maximum programmes was another expression of this historical moment and the latter rapidly became the revolutionary fig-leaf which the smallest gust of social wind would inevitably carry away.

However, to situate best the 1917 revolution, one must note that it was definitely a revolution inside a counter-revolution, i.e. there was not really a revolutionary break worldwide despite the left currents. This break postulated the final rejection of democracy. The Russian revolution could not maintain itself at the level of the overgrowth either, i.e. shorten the capitalist stage and, in certain sectors, avoid it altogether. It thus became compatible with the reign of the counter-revolution (i.e. the development of capital, as we think in terms of communism). It will be the same with the Chinese and anti-colonial revolutions. However, if these revolutions immediately strengthened the counter-revolution, they also finished it as the counter-revolution reached its conclusion thanks to them and extinguished the revolutionary potential of 1848. That is the basis of the papering over of the Russian revolutionary phenomenon some do.

This shows the fragmentary character of Bordiga's contribution. He thought out a resistance to capital, but performed a 'restoration' of marxism by returning to the Bolsheviks' positions (up to and including the Second Congress of the Communist International), thus holding the movement in the counter-revolutionary sphere. This affirmation of a possible resistance to capital can only be understood by allowing for two statements by Bordiga: 1. marxism is a theoretical anticipation (12), 2. marxism is also the theory of the counter-revolution (here he clearly differed from Korsch). Now that the phase of the

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counter-revolution is over due to the emergence of the revolution (1968), Bordiga's theoretical activity is superseded.

The theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, rooted in the Jacobins of the French revolution and in Babeuf, was taken up by Buonarroti and slightly differently by Flora Tristan, S. Born and some Chartists, flowered with Blanqui and his disciples (e.g. Tkachey), existed bright and clear in Marx, determinant as Lenin said, (Bernstein virulently reproached Marx for not having been able to overcome his blanquism), was hegemonic in Lenin and the Bolsheviks and was completed by Bordiga. It postulated that that the despotic intervention of the proletariat in the economic process could hasten the passage to communism. It was the extolling of political action which should have shortened the capitalist phase of development. One cannot avoid a mode of production once it has been established. Thus the cycle originating in 1848 is now over.

The debate that began then between supporters of a classist revolution and one that could be called communitarian (populism began in 1848), was ended by the defeat of both and the triumph of the capitalist class, of capital, which can only ensure its victory by the mystification of the proletariat as ruling class.

Until now the communist revolution has developed on the basis of the formal domination of capital over society, or even more, on the basis of its transition to real domination. Therefore one has to state clearly the characteristics of the future revolution, if only in homage to Bordiga who concluded his study of Russia by setting its arrival date at 1975. The future, but not distant, revolution will immediately be conditioned by the following fact: capital worldwide tends to negate classes. It realizes this by the generalization of wage-labour, reducing all men to the level of wage-labourers, functionaries for capital, and so produces a universal class (in numbers and, potentially, in its goal). One does not have to restructure the old classes clearly and precisely, but to push the movement of negation to the end by destroying the mystification. It is thus that one has been able to represent momentarily the phenomenon, congealed as it were in one of its phases, while one did not take into account the tendency for the state to become society in all class societies. The capitalist state realizes this tendency with the CMP and the internalization of capital's domination by men due to everyone becoming the next one's policeman. Besides, more than ever there is no absolute break between what is capitalist and its negation, above all, historically speaking, between the proletarian and what one might call man. In fact the duality is in each being in a more or less distinct and acute manner, even in those who revolt against capital's domination, which has made some say that the class struggle occurs even on an individual level. It is no longer a matter of class struggle, but a struggle of men and women against capital dominating humanity which it has made hierarchical in terms of its total valorization. The state is like capital's social incarnation which keeps all men under its yoke by external force, i.e. coercion exercised by a separate body (police, army, elements of repression found in each production unit: and all is production for capital) and by internal pressure,

progressively more intimate acceptance of capital's representations.

Only humanity can rise up against capital's oppression (the contradiction is such that it is humanity which favoured capital's production). There can only be a clash with capital if this humanity is revolutionized. This will not happen with a united front of all the present day members of humanity (what are called the proletariat and the middle classes etc.) because this would to rivet all revolutionaries onto the level of the past class struggles. Today men must surpass their old representations and no longer perceive themselves in a classist schema, but to recognize themselves in their common state: slaves to capital, and thus to discover the place and moment of their liberation. The unification of humanity can no longer take place only by a struggle between two elements, men on one side (before one said proletarians), the capitalist state (previously known as the ruling class) on the other, but it must also come about in all of us because every one of us has been capitalized to different degrees. If the struggle loses its Manicheism and millenarianism, it will still be necessary and will become harder and more virulent. The revolution will only be possible if there is production of revolutionaries. Being revolutionary now is to tend to pose oneself as a person no longer of the past, but existing on the state of possibility in society itself. Presently it is dominated by the pole of capital, the communist pole is really too weak for there to be an opposition which divides this society into two camps, but from the moment that the movement of the autonomization of men regarding capital, thus regarding the state (seen according to all its characteristics), will assume some depth, society will also tend to be polarized according to communism until the moment when the tension will become too strong and the eruptive phase of the revolution will break out. The revolution no longer has the immediate goal of building a state, even a transitory one. There can no longer be the dictatorship of the proletariat because it is dissolved in the social whole and, in any case, it can only triumph in negating itself. The goal is the formation of the new community. In April 1917 Lenin wished to realize a



state no longer a state: a state commune. The situation is now ripe for beginning the entry of the community able to impose its dictatorship to eradicate capital and its presuppositions.

Thus if the proletariat in Russia had a romantic task, as Bordiga said in 1953 (Kibalchich had stated this in 1881) and in 1968 we wrote that "the proletariat no longer has to accomplish a romantic task, but a human role", one has to show how it is to be realized. It is evident that this goes beyond the investigation of the Russian revolution, but one must show that in huge Russia, now the USSR, the only solution was and is communism because, unlike the West, where society as a whole, or at least an important part, was able to enjoy a more favourable situation after feudalism, in Russia there was the immediate transfer from one despotism to another (the impossibility of liberalism and democracy). The Russians' struggle was to rediscover the communities and what was a vague recollection in the West was still tangible reality with them. The populists' project, also Marx's, was stranded and the CMP was imposed on the country. However, we are fully convinced that the project will manifest itself in another form, all the energies cannot be dedicated to saving something from the past, but to creating a new future. And there both the West and the USSR will inevitably meet again.

The great revolutionary wave culminating in Paris and Mexico in 1968 seemed to have spared the USSR and there were serious effects only in the tampon countries. However, the persistence of the shock was such that in 1970 there was an insurrection in Poland indicating that the old battle line between communist revolution and capital was still in motion. Besides, the Asian countries, either bordering directly on the fault line or more distant from it, have not yet been domesticated. This means that we must consider two sets of contradictions on a world scale derived from the CMP at its highest level of development and those which arise from the impossibility of realizing its domination in areas of very strong communitarian activity.

To characterize the coming revolution, one has to state how capital's domination occurs today, especially in the West.

The process of the anthropomorphosis of capital was accomplished while that of the capitalization of men was fully developing. Capital's development has drawn in utility (marginalism and neo-marginalism) which is why it can foresee the behaviour of men while they are totally subjugated by capital's laws. By dominating in the name of the productive worker (Keynes and the theory of full employment), it realizes the proletarian ruling class in a mystified form. Thus the 1848 programme (i.e. all bar communism) has been realized.

Capital has perverted the whole revolution, all demands have been taken up and denatured, the communitarian movement in the USSR, the utopian one in the USA and that in Israel (one must not forget that this country could only be created after the defeat of the proletariat, Jews emancipated as Jews and not as men, destruction of the Bund's communitarian project, then that of Borochov, even if those two projects were less radical than those of 1848), even the abolition of labour is now the utopia of capital because it would make humans superfluous, robbing them of their activity. Similarly the

desire to create new relations between men and women is changed into sexual emancipation and, as ever, in bourgeois-capitalist society, one has not had the man and the woman emancipated as man and woman, but as two sexes, allowing the commercialization of all emotional and sexual relationships.

But capital does not content itself with having recomposed and absorbed all men's past, their unconsciousness becomes mercantile fodder disputed by the various psychoanalytical sharks. Capital wants to colonize the future of the species and so remove any possibility from it of another development, locking it up rigidly in a totally programmed daily life, thus moving towards absolute domination over man.

The revolutionary movements remain stuck to the past (the word revolutionary is thus a stylistic concession here) and in the rejuvenation of capital (third worldism's triumph). They cannot make the leap or recognize and accept the discontinuity because the past weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living. Presently one can see the pendulum of history in motion, rise of the revolutionary movements, repression, stagnation of these movements, the soaring of capital, at least US capital, during this period, then another rise etc.. The USA and the USSR try to profit from these oscillations as one can see in Latin America, but the movement which each time tries to oppose the existing order hits a wall, returns to the starting point, and sets off for the obsessional wall... This is the generalized impasse. It is even worse in some cases: there is a massacre pure and simple, e.g. that of the Palestinians to which the Arab countries, Israel and the international 'left' contributed directly or indirectly. The international 'left' deluded itself and the Palestinians as to their power: the 'left' that was searching for its revolutionary event, ite new Vietnam!

The present revolutionary movement does not have to struggle against these perversions, nor to drive the moneylenders from the temple one has to seize. All that has been perverted is what could have been realized without a radical revolution. What one must do is to act in view of the latter. Having reached this point, one often meets the following objection: capital can recuperate everything. But this is precisely the attribute of all social formations which struggle against their limitation, to attempt to survive by including, so as to say, the antagonistic social formation, but by doing so it becomes a form full of alien content which flakes off at the first shock and allows the shaking of the new social form in an impetuous movement. Capital has entered the field of revolution to such an extent that some already talk of a new counter-revolution able to effect depollution, demographic regulation etc., even while the revolution has not shown itself effectively. When there is a revolution, there are effectively only revolutionaries: there is no one to defend the old world. It is only when the movement slows down that the counter-revolution organizes. But it is inadequate not to fear recuperation: one must be able to live in relation to the discontinuity because the coming revolution brings out a discontinuity in relation to all previous ones.

What we have given up to now is a non-exhaustive explanation of the discontinuity with the past. But this explanation does not indicate it as the present or future movement. Now this latter clearly manifested itself during the short span of May-June 1968, which was preceded by a period when it was already possible to anticipate it and was followed by some movements confirming it (e.g. Poland 1970, Sri Lanka 1971). The whole ideological apparatus clearly strives to veil this discontinuity (there is nothing better than recuperation for this and it matters not which minister spoke of changing life, of imagination in power!). All the political gangs denied it as to recognize it would be to recognize their own death. Some who awoke as revolutionaries in May 1968 now discover that it was a reformist movement. This was a deep discontinuity because it reached the very root of man. May proclaimed the liberation of the gesture, word and imagination. The first two have already been seized on by capital in the course of its anthropomorphosis and now it tries to remove the third, for it is with imagination, by the use of the frontal part of the brain (neo-cortex) that humane will really be able to be creators and somehow realize the old dream of humanity: becoming gods. May also demanded the liberation of the individual. There again it was a case of a process rooted in the whole evolution of the human being. It is only with the person that the individual can emancipate itself and cease being slave to the species. In both cases the biological revolution can only be accomplished with a total communist revolution. Thus the cycle originating in the dissolution of primitive communism (first form of the realization of humanity) will end and with it all prehistory. Besides, there will be the achievement of another cycle (historical arc) with a far greater amplitude which began with the appearance of the vertebrates, from the freeing of the forefield (forelimbs and face), liberation of the latter from prehension and compensation for this loss in the anthropoids through the development of speech etc., to the flowering of the biological substrate of imagination (13).

Obviously we shall only note the biological dimension's importance because describing it would be too long, but we shall at least foresee an objection. Talking of a biological revolution does not mean that it must be led by scientists, nor that one must wait for the whole social world to acquire the required knowledge for it to happen. On the contrary, we remark on the fact that the scientists and technicians of various specialities, by coming to pose the problem

13. Cf. Leroi-Gourhan who shows the phenomenon of the externalization of gesture and speech in his magnificent book Le Geste et la Parole and how technique exuded by man becomes his antagonist; what had become externalized becomes oppressive. Replacing technique by capital and by showing from which moment this substitution is necessary, it is possible to understand the present clash between the biological human needs and the constraints of capital.

We shall return to all that in a later study. Let us note on the same subject a book by G. Ceserano and G. Collu called Apocalisse e rivoluzione (Bari, 1973).

of social overthrow, desiring it, even if they had to provide a recipe for it based on elements of their speciality, shows that the social group nearest to the global production process of capital (capital cannot live without science) is forced to separate itself from the contemporary Gemeinwesen, as Marx said, indicating that there is already a revolutionary movement underway. It is not the savants as such who could lead it because they still think with the presuppositions of this Gemeinwesen. As ever it will be the group most ignorant of science which will be able to destroy the CMP with their action. The May movement also showed this: it was not the savants who proclaimed in the roads or who wrote liberation slogans on the walls.

May 1968 and the previous movement in the USA showed above all another biological dimension: the need to reconcile man and nature. On the other hand, by exalting action, rejecting the various ideologies and even refusing theory, the movement showed another requirement in the desire to affirm life. Western civilization from the start has transformed all life into knowledge and one must transform all knowledge into life (as Nietzsche showed). The society of capital is the rule of death and it would be easy to show that capital as reified (sachliche), autonomized form is merely absolute knowledge!

One has to abolish the old cognitive process which implies that destruction is necessary for knowledge. For that individual man must be reconciled with himself by the reconciliation of the brain and the senses, and also to reconcile himself as a species. The coming revolution will integrate the needs of previous ones. Communist theory born with the rise of the proletariat in history is thus not to be rejected, on the contrary, it is now most verified, but it cannot be effected other than by a radical revolution, as Marx stated from 1843 on, transforming society and man.

The revolution will not merely resolve the problem engendered by the CMP, but all those bracketed during the development of human societies (e.g. the return to a kind of paganism, a revolt of the body against the spirit (14)). In the USSR, the community sought since the middle of the last century was papered over in the 1917 revolution. It will impose itself again as an irrepressible requirement and as a positive solution to human development, thus rejoining the movement in the West and, starting from different historico-social facts, that of the rest of the world. The huge community of men and women will not annihilate, but integrate (and in their own development) all human diversities (15).

Jacques Camatte,
December 1972

14. Norman O. Brown Life against Death (London, 1959)

15. We have frequently used P.-P. Poggio's Marx, Engels e la rivoluzione russa Quaderni di movimento operaio e socialista n. 1 (July, 1974).

List of Illustrations

Front Cover 'A revolutionary assembly in a village, March 1917' in Illustrierte Geschichte der russischen Revolution ed. W. Astrov, A. Slepkov and J. Thomas, Neuer Deutscher Verlag - Willi Münzenberg, Berlin, 1928.

page 23 Zeyttung, Georg Kreydlein, Nürnberg, 1561, reproduced in Arnolds Spekke History of Latvia: an outline, Stockholm, 1951.

page 34 John Augustus Atkinson and James Walker (of Conway Street) A Picturesque Representation of the Manners, Customs and Amusements of the Russians in one hundred coloured plates: with an accurate explanation of each plate, in English and French, James Carpenter and Joseph Booker, London, 1812. (The journey to collect the material was made in 1803).
A meeting of the Mir (detail), by S.A. Korovin (1893).

page 36 Map of Peasants' revolts in 1905 and 1917-21. Based on Tsarist and Provisional Government Statistics, Arshinov's History of the Makhnovist Movement and Oliver H. Radkey The Unknown Civil War in Soviet Russia, Stanford, 1976.

page 64 'Long live the factory committee league! Long live arming of the workers!' from Illustrierte Geschichte... cit. p. 219.

This text was written as an introduction to Russia and Revolution in Marxist Theory and Economic and Social Structure of Russia Today (both by Bordiga). Only part of the second text was published (Editions de l'oubli, 2, Rue Wurtz, Paris 13^e, France), the planned production of the first text being the subject of legal action by the International Communist Party. The introduction to this edition (which is not the same as the one translated here) is to be published in Italian by La Vecchia Talpa (C.P. 231, 80100 Napoli, Italy) as La rivoluzione russa e la teoria del proletariato.

Marx, Engels e la rivoluzione russa by Pier-Paolo Poggio is to be republished along with his Aspetti della teoria sociale in Russia: L'ideologia communitaria slavofila by Jaca Book (Via Aurelio Saffi 19, 20123 Milano, Italy) as Obščina: La comune contadina nella rivoluzione russa.

The present text Community and Communism in Russia has also been published in Italian (Jaca Book) as Comunità e comunismo in Russia, and in Spanish (Edita Zero, S.A. Máximo Aguirre, 5. Bilbao, Spain) as Comunidad y comunismo en Rusia, Colección "Lee y Diecute" Serie R - Núm. 60.

Other translations from Invariance:

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The Communist Workers' International by Herman Gorter (London, 1977), with a preface by Carsten Juhl pp. vi + 16

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48202, U.S.A.)

60p